

The Lord's Church Competing With Community Churches

1 Tim. 3:15

Introduction:

- A. The constant pressure to compete with various churches in community.
 - 1. Other churches seem to offer so much to the community.
 - a. Social services.
 - b. Recreation facilities.
 - c. Health care - physical and mental.
 - 2. Other churches seem to capture most of the attention.
 - a. Activities publicized and praised by news media.
 - b. Officials praised as community leaders.
 - 3. Other churches attract more people from the community.
 - 4. All kinds of pressure attract and keep "our share" of those others are getting.
 - a. Envious members pressure elders, preachers, etc. to compete.
 - b. Weak members wonder why "our church" cannot compete.
 - c. Preachers pressured into becoming PR men in the community.
- B. There are good *reasons* why the Lord's church cannot compete with others on their level.

Discussion:

- I. The Lord's Church Is Limited To Scriptural Authority For Its Practice. (2 Tim. 3:16).**
 - A. Our faith must not stand in human wisdom. (1 Cor. 2:4,5).
 - B. We cannot go beyond what is written. (2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 4:6).
- II. The Lord's Church Is Not Authorized To Practice A "Social Gospel."**
 - A. Focuses on preparing eternal life rather than this life.
 - 1. Spiritual health rather than physical/mental health.
 - 2. Spiritual exercise rather than physical exercise.
 - B. Supports spiritual goals and activities rather than social ones.
 - 1. Social and physical needs met at "home" rather than "church". (1 Cor. 11:22,34).
 - 2. Christians operate through other agencies to meet "secular" needs and responsibilities.
 - C. Leaves social, economic, political, and other such services to proper agencies of this world.
- III. The Lord's Church Is Limited In Its Attraction To People In The Community.**
 - A. Because its spiritual nature does not appeal to the majority. (Mt. 7:13,14).
 - 1. Weak and foolish to many. (1 Cor. 1:20-2:5)
 - 2. Does not appeal to carnal minds of the majority. (1 Cor. 2:14)
 - 3. Does not offer what the carnal mind is looking for. (1 Cor. 1:22)
 - B. Because it cannot scripturally adapt itself to appeal to carnal minds.
 - C. Because it cannot use many tactics often used to attract and keep numbers.
 - 1. "Super-salesmanship" approach to evangelism. (2 Cor. 4:2; 10:3-5).
 - 2. "Bait and switch" approach -- carnal attraction then spring "spiritual" trap.
 - 3. Emotionalism.
- IV. The Lord's Church Cannot Always Compete And Win In The General Area Of Good Works.**
 - A. Cannot always "out-visit" denominational folks.
 - B. Cannot always "out-relieve" denominational folks.
 - C. Cannot always "out-friendly" denominational folks.
 - D. Cannot always "out-empathize" denominational folks.
- V. The Lord's Church Can Complete and Win Only In The Spiritual Realm.**

- A. It is pillar and ground of truth. (1 Tim. 3:15).
- B. It is equipped for spiritual service. (Eph. 4:11-16)
- C. It offers, in spiritual realm, what no other institution can.
 - 1. By preaching the pure gospel. (Gal. 1:8,9; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:2-4).
 - 2. By worshiping in spirit and truth. (John 4:24; Matt. 15:9).
 - a. Limiting music to singing. (Eph. 5:19)
 - b. Offering up prayers. (Acts 12:5);
 - c. Observing the Lord's Supper on first day of week. (Acts 20:7)
 - d. Preaching/teaching apostles doctrine. (Acts 2:42)
 - e. Giving into church treasury. (1 Cor. 16:2).

Conclusion:

- A. Let's quit pressuring ourselves, elders and preachers to out do denominationalists.
- B. Let's realize that we are unique and do not need to compete with others in every realm.