

# They Knew Not Why They Came Together

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By the authority of Jesus Christ, saints all over the world come together upon the first day of the week to break bread, and to engage in other expressions of their praise and adoration unto God in spirit and truth (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34). Around the world local churches assemble for worship and edification each Lord's day, and at other appointed times between Lord's days. In many cases some of those people who come together do not have any real understanding why they have assembled. Some assemble to fulfill a duty to the church; some to criticize and find fault; some to sleep; some come to play; some come because they love the preacher; some come to see and be seen; some come because they want to be religious; a few come to worship in spirit and in truth. These are the ones who receive the blessings of scriptural worship. The reasons for the assembly of the saints are clearly taught in the word of God.

An assembly of citizens in Ephesus resulted from a complaint by Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines for Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians. He called together the workmen of the same occupation as that of himself and proposed a solution. "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth" (Acts 19:24-27).

The whole city of Ephesus was said to have been filled with confusion. "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together" (Acts 19:32). Most of those in the assembly did not know why they were there. Does such ignorance and confusion characterize some of the assemblies for worship today?

This reference to an assembly did not refer to the church meeting, but was a mob created by Demetrius who was concerned about losing his trade. The circumstances of this assembly may be much like that of the church in many places today. In almost any assembly of any size there are those who "knew not wherefore they were come together." The sad part is that they have no ambition to learn why they come together.

Some people use the assembly of the saints as a place to make friends and acquaintances for business purposes and to plan socials for the coming week. This hour of public assembly for worship and edification is sometimes used to promote picnics, parties, showers, etc. It is often used to promote the person and well being of the preacher and his personal interest. It is his profession and he should secure it by all means. One would think the singing and praying are ancillary matters.

Some think they come to the assembly to accommodate the preacher and elders. It is as if they viewed themselves as clients, doing a great favor to the preacher by coming. If the preacher speaks too plainly of their sins, they threaten to quit coming to the assembly, and sometimes they do. They

are doing him a service by coming, they think.

Some come to the assembly to be seen: to show off their new clothes. These people use the assembly as a time and place to impress others with appearance, and vie for popularity with the group. They do not know the real reason for the assembly.

Some make their plans when they come to the assembly of the church to rest and even get a nap in preparation for the afternoon activities. No higher purpose for the assembly occurs to them.

Why do we come together on the first day of the week? It certainly is not for the above reasons. We are authorized to assemble to "break bread" (Acts 20:7).

We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together to exhort and provoke one another unto good works (Heb. 10:25). We will say that the church assembles on the first day of the week to worship the Lord and to teach and exhort one another—to edify the body in love.

Worship consists of singing: teaching and admonishing one another; praying: the church prayed together in an assembly for Peter (Acts 12:5,12); preaching: Paul preached to the disciples assembled upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7); breaking of bread: eating the Lord's supper in memory of his death (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34); and giving of our prosperity to the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 9:14; 2 Cor. 11:8). The combination of **all** these expressions of worship include nothing more than worship to God and edifying the church. Other matters should be left out of the assembly on the first day of the week. We hear far too much about profit and pleasure and far too little about the word of the Lord.

Prepare your hearts and lives to meet with the saints of like mind upon the first day of the week to get the most from the worship to God at that time. If you come with the right heart and for the right purpose, you will be blessed beyond your expectation.