

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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Where are the Children?

--By Tabitha

Deuteronomy 31:10-13, "And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law **before all Israel in their hearing.** 12 **Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: 13 And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."**

Nehemiah 8:2-3, "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation **both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding**, upon the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, **before the men and the women, and those that could understand;** and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law."

As Moses instructed the people at the end of the Jubilee during the feast of tabernacles, to gather all the people

together; men, women, children, and the stranger in their land, to hear the words written in the Law, it also tells us WHY he was told to do so; "That they and their (future) children **would "learn" and "fear the Lord our God" and "observe to obey the Law"**."

One was a gathering done at the end of the Jubilee, which was on the 50th year, the other a restoration of worship.

But this example was not just in the Old Testament, it is in the New Testament, as well. In **Matthew 14:21** and **Matthew 15:38** it gives the account when Jesus was feeding the multitudes that the men were not the only ones mentioned, it also states "...**besides women and children...**" were amongst the gathering. Families were **together** hearing the Master speak, seeing the apostles taking bread to the companies, and serving the Lord.

God's wisdom on gathering ALL the people together shows these benefits: 1 - God wanted all to hear the "same" instructions.

2 - God wanted the people and children to hear and obey His Words.

3 - God wanted the children to learn to fear (respect) our God.

4 - God wanted the leaders to pass along His message to the people so what was being taught daily within their individual families would give confirmation of truth and training.

5 - God did not want anyone to say, "I didn't know that".

6 - God provided validity to the children what the parents were instructing them individually.

7 - God provided a way for the strangers to know that His people were different and obeyed His instructions.

8 - God wanted to confirm that His appointed leaders were to be listened to and respected.

In many congregations I have visited, I don't see the children in worship services; and if I do, it's not for very long before they are ushered out to their individualized classes or to practice for plays or challenging games.



One church website I visited posted the following information for their worship services (Exact Quote):

"For Kids Ages 4yrs-5th Grade - We have Jr. Church, where during the first hour, they have a mini-service built just for them. Their service prepares them for the future by mimicking the adult service in the worship elements included: songs, offering, communion, and a "sermon" message that is, of course, geared towards children and presented on their level. Then during the ABF/Sunday School Hour, they head to classes, divided by age group."

Why would children 4 years old thru the 5th grade have a "separate" worship service for their OWN level?

(Didn't they just have that type of level given for them during the Sunday school hour?) This is not the example shown in God's Word and certainly is not training them to honor those who are their elders, nor seeing how they should progress as they mature.

Is it any wonder that we are seeing many of the youth who do not show respect, relate to or fellowship with older folk; who want to bring in a snack and a drink in the assembly (that's how they've been trained), or drop out of Church altogether? I am sure that those Church leaders are not intentionally trying to do harm, but there is a division being made here when **unity** should be the goal. (This, of course, does not include the newborn and very young babies who are not able to control their behavior as they are of no understanding yet about discipline at those ages.)

Separating the children and/or groups from the adults during the main Worship Services raises some concerns:

#1 – It divides.

#2 – Children are not seeing how the adult worship service is to take place - which is to be done "decently and in order". **1 Corinthians 14:40**, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

#3 – Children are being taught in a different environment therefore will cause them not to wish to be amongst the adults for worship because it's "not done like they're used to it".

#4 – Youth services usually have "fun" involved to keep the children attending; but what one wins them with, is what they will lose them with.

#5 – The adults do not get to have the vivaciousness of the youth among them.

#6 – The children do not have the wisdom and experience of older generations to help guide, mentor, or teach them.

#7 – Children will have little respect for the leadership or elderly if they are only amongst their own peers.

#8 – It is not training them the true way God intended His Word to be received. "Let the older men teach the younger, let the older women teach the younger." **Titus 2:4**

It should be noticed that God intended all the ages of people to be together where the Word of God is being spoken by the leaders. No division or separation into groups or individual age classes have been noted in Scripture.

I witnessed a few parents who visited the congregation I am currently in ask if we had "children's church". They were told that we did not, and we never saw them again.

Many people are seeking a place where they can take their children during services. It almost seems like they desire to have their children babysat for an hour or two instead of having a family unit worshipping together.



What is the purpose of children's church? Most would say it is to teach the children on "their level of understanding". Scriptures teach that this should be done in the home by the parents.

Coming together as an assembly should be the whole congregation being taught the same thing; where everyone is hearing the same message and children would hear the leaders confirm what parents may have been trying to teach them at home.

Years ago, one mother told me that she wanted her child in a children's service because he would not mind her and always acted up, therefore

not allowing her to get anything out of the message herself.

She was a friend of mine, so I politely told her that her young son should receive training outside of the Church service in the home to learn how to behave during services when they attend. She was a widow, had not remarried, and had a full-time job, which she said exhausted her so much that she had little time to do any training outside of the home. So, at each Church service she would sit out in the eating area where people usually end up talking and her son would go outside and climb in the trees.

Whether she kept her son with her or placed him in a separate class for his age group, the situation would have still been unresolved, and the same problem would only be moved geographically to another class where he may interrupt a whole classroom of kids and dishevel the teacher. One situation may be resolved, but a worse one would have been created.

Years have gone by and that boy is now a young man who does not even attend services and if he does come, he does not go into the main assembly but sits out in the other area talking to others or roaming around and texting. Wasn't that what he was trained to do?

How will the children know who the Shepherds are, their duties, and be able to trust Godly mentors (should they have a need to talk with someone outside the family home)?

Then again, another friend of mine called me very concerned because her children did not attend the Children's Church and the other parents were constantly putting her down and making her feel "guilty" for not sending them to the children's services. She and her husband train their children Biblically at home and the children's services were more about games and having fun rather than learning God's Word.

Christian members were treating my friend like she was damaging her

children when she and her husband were the ones trying to honor God's example in how to train and raise their children.

Young people today should be hearing the same message from the Master's Word, learning to fear (respect) the Lord, and seeing the communion plate being served to the saints by those designated to do so (possibly their own father or grandfather). There should be order, balance, respect for authority and leadership, and something to look forward to being part of in the future. Satan delights in division.

Something To Think About...

Member: We haven't seen you much in the past several years, you were usually in with the youth programs, so we thought you were with them.

Young Man: Yea - it's been a while since I've attended services here. I used to go to the services for us kids but after a while it seemed as though it was only about games, like they didn't really care about teaching Scripture or much Spiritual growth.

Member: You didn't get any Bible lessons?

Young Man: Well, sure, but it was the same old popular Bible stories... Jonah and the whale, Samson and his strength, Joseph in jail in Egypt, Noah and the flood....

Member: Yes, I guess I see your point.

Young Man: You know that my dad died a few months back.

Member: Yes, I know. That's the last time I saw you - at his visitation.

Young Man: I didn't feel like talking much then. I've had a lot of things I've thought about since he passed. I guess now I'm wanting to be closer to the Lord - to see if He has the answer to the emptiness I feel.

Member: I understand, and I know He does.

Young Man: Do you know what really hurts?

Member: Your dad's presence at home?

Young Man: No. So many things I missed out because I was around my friends in all the services. I will never get to see my dad do any communion meditations or taking up the offering on Sunday mornings when it was his turn. I won't be able to take the Lord's Supper with him on the Lord's Day. These are things I can't get back and I regret the past years when I should have been with him, learning from him because he knew so much about the Bible.

Member: I'm sorry but I see what you mean. You know you didn't have to go to the Children's programs and services.

Young Man: Yea, I know but you don't think of it like that at the time. I wanted to be with my friends and thought it was old-fashioned to sit with my dad and family - that wasn't "cool". Now I find after coming back that all but 2 of my friends have left the faith totally. Those who were in the youth programs have really gone a different path.

Member: You're right. We've noticed we've lost a lot of the youth, which has been a concern for several of us lately. We just don't understand why.

Young Man: I don't know. I doubt if I would have come back if this had not have happened to my dad. I was having a great time just having fun; I didn't need the Lord. But now, the empty feeling I have inside, I wanted to come and be in the place where God's people were; to see if God would help me.

Member: The Lord's arms are always willing to welcome back one of His children. I am so glad you decided to join us today. If you seek, you will find, if you ask, He will give an answer, and if you knock, the door will be opened unto you...

Young Man: That's a song we used to sing, isn't it? I think my dad used to read that to me from the Bible. At that age, I didn't know exactly what it meant. Now I know I won't ever be able to ask him Bible questions. All that is gone. I won't be able to hear dad singing, watch him prepare to give his tithe for the offering, or even teach a lesson for Sunday school.

Member: Well, maybe this is an eye opener for all of us. Well, son, I really need to get ready to teach for the Sunday school hour. Look me up after services. I would like to talk more with you, if you don't mind.

Young Man: That would be nice. My dad always looked up to you and I heard him a few times on the phone asking for your advice. I appreciate it.

Something to Notice:

See what kids would be missing out during their youth if they would not be amongst their family? In a blink of an eye, it's gone; time we can't ever get back. Not to mention your children are not always going to be little - they grow up so fast and then they're on their own.

What have you trained your children in life? Do you trust God and His example or a kids' feelings and what they want to do?

Why not obey the example from Scripture and have all your family (and any friends staying at your home) join you in the assembly with the rest of the saints?

It's not the responsibility of the Church to train the children and the act of discipline was never given to anyone else; that is all delegated to the parents, by God.

Shouldn't we follow the Biblical design and train the children in the home and equip them in the ways of God? If we honor God's Word and how teaching and training occurs, services and lives would be far different.

Where are YOUR children during worship hours?