

Church – what, where, when, how.

Week 2

What is a Church Service?

This sermon is really an aside a bit of a thought that became bigger than initially thought. It comes from this question: **What is a church service?**

We place that as a time of worship and learning that's what we call church.

Ok so

we have church the buildings,
and
church - the event now.

I remember hearing an explanation of the term **Gospel Service** in the tradition of the Baptist denomination as this.

The morning had a gathered time of worship and learning for Christians. So at night in the thought processes of our English Baptist forebears they thought to offer “service” to the poor, the non-Christian and the sinners of their community by putting on a time of explanation about the gospel.

I have no idea if this explanation is valid or even true but the concept of service is different from what we have today.

A church service for us is an
event of Christian worship and learning
but

Christian service is different, a serving of others.

A Church is in its essence about service

– The service to God and to others.

You know – the Love God and love others verse.

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV2011)

³⁷ Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

It’s not just a pretty couple of verses but A descriptive way to live.

Not only as individuals but also as a corporate body – our church.

Luke 4:8 (NIV2011)

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

What’s this “Serve Him only”?

Should these two be molded together? By that I mean should the two ideas about church – both the event in time and space and the church as being an agent of service? I say a resounding yes, but that will change things won't it.

How do we provide Christian service to each other and our community?

Our service and pastoral care is not an event or program.

It is care through relationship.

Church service “should” be seen in the light of what the gathered people do for others and not be a limited time space event.

It appears we have changed a word’s meaning (again)

And

it makes me wonder if subconsciously we think we do service by attending a church service and we don't have to do practical serving.

Let's think about this. Do we subconsciously think coming to gather on Sunday mornings is kind of like getting our religiosity done for the week. I am not talking about what we believe or even what we say we believe. Is there something deeply imbedded in our psych that makes us assume that Sunday worship time is the most important time of the week?

Do we believe in the building being a sacred space and the gathered time being a sacred time?

As Baptists, theologically – no

Yet practically – possibly.

1 Corinthians 3:9 (NIV2011)

⁹For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

Yep that says it doesn't it. Service – what we do for God – in fact it says we are the building. And uses another analogy that of us being a field. The original readers understood the concept here. A field is for planting stuff in. We are the building – the place where we meet, live and do our stuff and we are a field where we grow, produce and develop.

So the building is not the church the people are and the Service is not the service what we do is. Sounds to me a bit like what Paul talks about in Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 12:4-5 (NIV2011)

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

Look at this carefully.

The gifts from the Holy Spirit are for serving people with. Now a building can't do that – but hey a building is a great tool to use. A period of time Sunday can't serve like the use of the gifts but it's a great tool.

That's why next year in February we will all do a spiritual gifts workshop and work out our gifts, how we fit together and what God has gifted us to do as a combined body of people. That is how we will set our vision! By looking at what God has gifted us to do.

Why? Because we are called to serve. WE are called to service. Each of us.