

**General Topics :: house church benefits****house church benefits - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/21 10:13**

dear brothers and sisters,

i am writing this because as i have studied the origins of a lot of our "church" traditions, i am finding that some things that we do every week in "church" does not find its roots in the N.T., but some other origin (tradition, pagan, etc).

one of those things that i am referring to is meeting in a church building.. i am not writing this to get into a debate on whether we should meet in "churches" or homes.

rather, i would like to know what are some of the real benefits of meeting in a house church.. i have only read about them, but i would like for people who have met in them or are meeting in them to write and tell us all of the benefits of them.

thank you so much for your time and future writings..

Re: house church benefits - posted by ravenmolehil, on: 2007/6/21 10:55

I have heard my grandmother mention home meetings as a blessing, being from the rural south this was a way of life for her & many others around the time of her childhood. My grandfather remembers such meetings where his illiterate uncle was often allowed to speak from memory & many in the community viewed him as a mighty preacher.

I haven't any experience in this area but the idea has began to grow on me. The home church seems to engage those in attendance and be a bit more intimate in fellowship. I don't know whether my grandparents are just romanticizing on the past but they have me curious. As being unchurched for most of my life, I find myself searching for biblical support for the balance of traditions etc. that take place within our local assembly & I look forward to the comments on this subject.

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/21 11:02

thank you ravenmolehill,

i always grew up in a church building, but never have i been a part of a house church.. i like you am curious about such a life, which is why i wrote the post.. i just wish there were already one by me that i knew of, but as much as i search for one, i can't find one..

i, like you, anticipate what others with experience of that may say..

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2007/6/21 14:20

I've been meeting with a group of believers in a home meeting for almost a year. It began as a college group affiliated with a major church. When the church divided a few of us had no idea where to go, but to continue gathering together at the former elders' home. Despite not having a formal pastor, there has come to be a natural submission to others, in order of manifested fruitfulness. The oldest member (41) is quite devout in his studies and devotion, leads us into regular prayer and evangelism, and is an able leader. In time I would not be surprised if the body lays hands on him to acknowledge the Lord's calling upon him to shepherd. What's best about our situation?

- 1.) We know one another intimately and no one can easily bury their struggles. We pray openly for one another and, when appropriate, confess our weaknesses.
- 2.) We are a committed group, not weakened by a mass of "long-term visitors", which enables us to grow together and then go out to the lost. No one is holding us back from being "too holy".
- 3.) No financial overhead. We share food when we meet, we gather in one another's homes. We know needs and can distribute to them. No pastor is being tempted to receive a \$90,000 salary with travel bonuses because all ten of us live frugally as it is.

4.)We have determined that if the group should ever reach 30 or so, we'll seek the Lord to form another leader in another home, sending five or ten of the member that direction. Not a lot of room for "power tripping" and pride. The elders of each house become a network of accountability.

Hope this helps.

The downside is

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/21 14:58

thank you michael (theopenlife),

that is awesome.. i love to read about that kinda stuff.. that is what my heart longs for..

i guess that i need to keep praying and waiting for the Lord to open the door and that i would find a fellowship like that.. thank you for some insight into your fellowship there in cheeseland..

ps.. by the way, i love the downside...none.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2007/6/21 15:52

If you look around online, there are some networks of house churches... I found one about 15 minutes from where I live, they actually meet in the city hall. Later on I found out that a faithful street preacher here goes to that fellowship. I don't recall the website, but if I do later, I'll post it.

Re: house church benefits - posted by Koinonia2 (), on: 2007/6/21 17:06

A great benefit is being rid of the unscriptural hierarchial clerical structure of almost all denominations. In house churches, there is no "Pastor," no pulpit, no pews, no passive laity. All are able to pastor, minister to one another, and meet in mutuality.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2007/6/21 18:16

I'm not against pastorship; history, as well as this site, testify of very many who were quite able men and worthy of the task. Such pastors are humble servants, readily submitting to the scriptures as the Spirit leads, regardless of whose mouth is used to deliver them. Yet, there is a tendency to grope for greater authority when the body moves a different direction. Each method has its flaws.

In some respects the house-church-model conceals or avoids certain faults on the basis of its size. Fewer members sometimes means closer accountability, humility, etc. Yet sin remains sin and, if unmortified within bodies of any size, will show its force. In a fellowship of fifteen there may be senseless pride, unchecked affections that blossom into violent passions, and sectarian spirits.

Where there is yet-unsanctified humanity, there is always the potential for disorder.

I sense that by "pastors" you meant so-called pastors with none of the heart for the biblical calling to shepherd. Even some house churches have those, but after twenty or thirty years they tend to become full-grown churches.

Re: - posted by Koinonia2 (), on: 2007/6/21 18:28

Thanks, theopenlife, I appreciate your post, and do agree with you.

By "pastors," though, I mean to say that the office of "pastor" is unscriptural. Pastoring - being a shepherd - is a function, not an office. The only church offices found in the New Testament are elders and deacons. The unscriptural modern practice of pastorship (which is a form of clerical hierarchy) usurps the Spirit's gifts and the participation of all the constituent believers in the church.

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2007/6/21 22:30

Quote:
-----The unscriptural modern practice of pastorship (which is a form of clerical hierarchy) usurps the Spirit's gifts and the participation of all the constituent believers in the church.

Here comes a discussion! :-) Care to elaborate? I'm not hard-lined on this subject, in fact I'm quite undefined, so here's an opportunity to enlighten a brother.

I must ask, if it is so plainly unscriptural, why do we regard so many in this position as rolemodels of Christian behavior? And, by the way, please define "pastor".

Interested...

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/21 22:53

dear openlife,

what my dear brother danielj was saying was that the office of "senior pastor" and "clerical hierarchy" is not a biblically founded..

while scripture does mention the function of a pastor (being an elder, caring for sheep, loving the flock) the bible does not show us that there is 1 main pastor that everyone follows and listens to.. in america, the pastor is the "head" of the church and everything is usually ultimately ran through them, whereas in scripture, in any given church, there were many pastors that function because it is not something we do, but something we are..

we think of elders as usually a group of people that are "under" the pastor, but biblically the elders and bishops and pastors all were the same thing.. it was not 3 offices, but 3 different words that describe the same function..

there is so much more, but that is not what this post is about, but i would love to discuss this with you or anyone that would like to talk on a private message or new thread..

thank you openlife for being willing to discuss something like this and not getting offended about it..

Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2007/6/22 1:45

A new thread is now begun.

Hidden in Him,

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/22 11:11

thank you for starting a new thread.. i will write on it as soon as i get a good bit of time..

but i still desire people on this site that are involved in home churches to write of the many benefits they personally experience..

i long and hunger for that kind of fellowship..

General Topics :: house church benefits

Re:, on: 2007/6/22 11:25

I have been blessed to have spent the last year fellowshiping, studying, praying with, ministering to the homeless and street preaching with a "house church", though we're more of a street church, in the Detroit area.

God has used this time to personally revive me from my half dead state by bringing me out of babylon (the North American Evangelical Church System) and into Acts style Christianity.

I will warn everyone that satan always has a counterfeit waiting for you, even in the house church movement. many wolves prowl around there, especially the "emergent church" crowd.

Find people who are willing to forsake all to follow Christ, care for the orphans and widows and preach the gospel to all creation... and don't compromise by taking part in unclean altars. Better to be in the wilderness, fellowshiping only with the Lord Jesus Christ than to compromise and have a false fellowship with those who do not walk in the light.

In Him - Jim

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/22 17:19

dear jim,

i am not too familiar with the "emergent church movement", how does it differ from the biblical fellowshiping of the NT??

Re: house church benefits, on: 2007/6/22 21:44

LoveHim asked

Quote:
-----i would like to know what are some of the real benefits of meeting in a house church.. i have only read about them, but i would like to know if people who have met in them or are meeting in them to write and tell us all of the benefits of them..

I was involved with a congregation of thirty or so that met at a community hall gymnasium complete with sterile white walls and fluorescent lights. During a prayer group, some of the church members discussed their wish for a new place to gather for service on Sundays. Someone suggested the intimacy afforded during our prayer groups could be extended to the rest of the congregation if we met in a house. We prayed to the Lord, and the very next Sunday, we met at an elder's house in the mountains, surrounded by beautiful trees and the fresh pine air...

I'll take a house over a man made temple any day of the week.

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/22 22:46

nice, thanks corey.. i appreciate the post.. how has meeting at the elder's home been better than meeting in a gym or "church building"??

in what ways has it been better???

Re:, on: 2007/6/23 0:15

The home is better than a church because:

1. You can sit on a couch, carpet, wherever, light a fire, brew some coffee, and commune for hours if the host is gracious enough;
2. Have an impromptu Bible study or prayer session;
3. Communion becomes lunch, drinks and meaningful conversation with the congregation, not simply crackers and juice;
4. Relaxed and casual, not formal and stuffy - no need to wear masks (best clothes, makeup, etc);

5. Saves everyone a whole lot of money in tithes.

I no longer attend that church due to doctrinal reasons - but it was great while it lasted!

Re: - posted by HopePurifies (), on: 2007/6/23 1:17

Quote:

LoveHim wrote:

dear jim,

i am not to familiar with the "emergent church movement", how does it differ from the biblical fellowshiping of the NT??

If he doesn't mind I'll answer for him. The emergent church is a very very dangerous movement (or as they would call it "conversation"). It is based on the postmodernist mindset- absolute truth is unknowable and cannot be discovered. It is ecumenical in nature, that is, trying to promote unity with the cost of good doctrine. (I'm using the big words because you'll come across them again).

Christianity today has an article supporting the emergent church. He says there are "five themes that characterize the emerging movement. I see them as streams flowing into the emerging lake." To summarize it the emergent church wants to reshape church (Hence the house church stuff etc. They often will call themselves Christ-followers instead of Christians to set themselves apart). Also, they seek to engage postmodernists- saying we cannot know absolute truth. The article claims only some groups of emergents are postmodernists while some are trying to free people from post modernism but I'm not so sure how true that is. Emergents also seek to make services fresh and new, with incense burning, pretty lights, hip music, laid back atmosphere. And of course the most shocking is that they embrace this, quoted directly from the article "...what really matters is orthopraxy and that it doesn't matter which religion one belongs to, as long as one loves God and one's neighbor as one's self." So that's what that article said, as a supporter.

Edit:

Excerpt from the Emergent Manifesto of Hope:

Can it be that the teachings of the gospel are embedded and can be found in reality itself rather than being exclusively isolated in sacred texts and our interpretations of those texts? If the answer is yes, can it be that they are embedded in other stories, other peoples' histories, and even other religions?...

God's table is welcoming all who seek, and if any religion is to win, may it be the one that produces people who are the most loving, the most humble, the most Christlike. Whatever the meaning of "salvation" and "judgement," we Christians are going to be saved by grace, like everyone else, and judged by our works, like everyone else...

For most critics of such open Christianity, the problem with inclusiveness is that it allows for truth to be found in other religions. To emerging Christians, that problem is sweet... Moreover, if non-Christians can know our God, then we want to benefit from their contribution to our faith. (192, 195,196,)

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/23 11:40

dear brothers,

thank you hopepurifies for the update on the emergent church.. that's some crazy stuff. do they not believe in the Word of God?? or do they think that the Bible is just up to whoever's interpretation of it?? it's amazing what this world is coming to and what "new modern christianity" is proclaiming..wow.

thanks corey for the 5 benefits of meeting in the home church. i'm sorry that you don't fellowship there anymore, but have you found a house church now that is a little closer with your doctrine??? if so, how is that going??

if anyone else has met themselves or know of people that met in a house church, i would love to hear about it and the benefits that they've experienced from such a fellowship..

Re:, on: 2007/6/23 14:15

I don't want to get off topic regarding this issue. However, it seems to me as I read the bible that there was one Pastor over each city. Today, we have way too many hirelings calling themselves Pastor.

Re: Scriptural Assembly - posted by DavidJoy (), on: 2007/6/23 14:16

Hi. I'm new to this forum, but I'm excited to find others who are hungry for revival, hungry for spiritual life, hungry for Him!

Briefly, I have been involved in a couple of "house churches" in the past and generally they were not very spiritual or edifying. I agree that in general private homes are the preferred meeting place for fellowship and corporate worship. Do a Scripture search on the number of times "the church that meets in the house of..." is mentioned in the NT (I think it's over 10 times). It's noteworthy that there were no set apart "church buildings" for the first 300 years of Christianity. From what I've read, the first church buildings were formerly pagan temples where the "Christian government" kicked out the previous occupants (the pagans) to make room for the Christians.

Anyway, to me the greater issue than where we meet is WHAT we do when we come together. This is a big issue, but for starters, how about 1 Cor. 14:26: "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." How often is that verse followed ("each of you") in most church gatherings today? Instead, we have followed the lecture style format of meetings where one man stands up front and does all the teachings while the rest of the brethren sit passively by. No wonder there is such a lack of zeal among men today when there is no emphasis on active participation and interaction among the gathered brethren!

I have gained a lot from being exposed to some of the teaching from the New Testament Restoration Foundation (NTRF), Jonathan Lindvall, Beresford Job, and Matthew Chapman (Kindling Publications). I don't agree with all of these brethren on every issue, but each of them has gone down this path of seeking to follow the Scriptural pattern of corporate assembly practices.

Also, in case anyone out there is interested, Jonathan Lindvall will be in this area of the State (Southwest Missouri) next week on the 29th and 30th teaching on this very topic (New Testament Church practices). If anyone is interested, let me know and I'll provide further details. Is there another place on this site where I could announce this meeting?

Grace and peace in Jesus,
David

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/23 19:58

dear david,

thank you for that post. i appreciate your words and experience in this matter.

you are correct, the issue is what we do when we meet. i have only been a part of the lecture style church all of my life and i hunger for a smaller group of members, who love God and love others completely. members who each bring something to edify, correct, guide, and encourage one another instead of relying on one man to feed all.

meeting in a home would not make all wrongs ok, but i think just being out of that kind of atmosphere for me would allow us to focus on the Lord and building each other up instead of building earthly kingdoms. it would allow us to focus on one another instead of the "pastors" vision and goals for the upcoming year.

i pray to God that i do not sound mad or anything like that because i am not, i am just hungering for something more than what i can get at a sunday morning service.

ps compliments, where do you see in the Bible that one pastor was over each church?? just wondering. love ya guys.

Re:, on: 2007/6/23 20:10

Quote:
-----I don't want to get off topic regarding this issue. However, it seems to me as I read the bible that there was one Pastor over each city. Today, we have way too many hirelings calling themselves Pastor.

Back then believers belonged to the "Church of Christ" and simply added "at Corinth" or "at Ephesus" to describe where they were located.

With all the denominations, creeds, sects, splits, divisions, etc, I don't think we're going back to the original form anytime soon.

Re: - posted by Koinonia2 (), on: 2007/6/23 22:33

Being the "church in" is not a name, but a description. Christ only has one church that includes all of His brothers and sisters. The gathering of that one church in any given city is the "church in" that city. This is how the church is described all over the epistles and in Revelation. There are some groups that try to practice this by referring themselves as "the church in." Even if this is not a practical reality today (with so many denominations), it is still a spiritual reality.

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/6/23 22:43

yeah corey, back then you belonged to Christ. it wasn't about the buildings (because they met in homes) or the services, it was just about seeing Jesus glorified..

there was a church in the city with multiple functioning pastors, prophets, evangelists, etc.

oh to see the church of Christ move in power as the church of the NT did..