

SIMULTANEOUS ACTS OF WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

- I. In the 1950's, I had occasion to visit a Christian Church following the morning service at the church of Christ, just to see first-hand what they did in worship.
 - A. This is where I first observed music going on with the communion service, as the organ played.
 - B. Since that time I have observed some congregations of the Lord's church today doing something similar.
 1. In some congregations in Ghana, there is accapella singing accompanying the portion of worship when the collection is taken.
 2. I was recently asked what I thought about such a practice, and I replied that I did not like it but had some thoughts of scriptures that might be beneficial for a study, which upon further study has helped ME to now WHY I don't like it.
 - a. By the word "simultaneous" we mean "*occurring at the **same time**, coinciding in **time**, simultaneous, going on at the **same** rate and exactly together.*" (Google).
 - b. This should clarify that we are discussing things that occur altogether at the same time.
- II. Does the New Testament address this matter, **directly**, or in **principle**?

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, the New Testament does not speak directly over this matter.

- A. However, this does not resolve the issue, as there ARE other matters that we have convictions about that are not specifically condemned or approved by NAME in scripture, but in principle, to help us see the truth on such matters.
- B. With this out of the way, we must look for either a **specific scripture** or **principle** or **implication** regarding something so similar, that we might learn about this matter.

II. 2nd, let's look at the principles and scripture that will help us.

- A. The first word to consider is the word **EDIFYING**. 1 Cor. 14:26
 1. There seems to have been a rush for many of the Corinthians to get involved in the exercise of spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 14:26
 - a. Paul said there was to be an ORDER for the exercise of these gifts, and to not say something while someone else is speaking (that is, NOT to have 2 or more functions at the same time). 1 Cor. 14:27-30
 - b. They were to have only ONE presentation at a time. v. 31
 - 1) Paul told them what to do, and it should have been easily understood.
 - 2) Paul said it was to be "by course", v. 27, meaning it was to be done "in turn" [NKJ], NASB, ESV].
 - 3) Paul said such should be done "one by one" (verse 31) NOT one "and" one, but "one by one"--one AFTER the other—not at the same time.
- B. The second word that has a bearing on this subject is the word **CONFUSION**. 1 Cor. 14:33
 1. They were DO nothing, or SAY nothing to confuse them in their assemblies.
 2. Even women were prohibited from SAYING anything while the "prophets" were delivering their messages. 1 Cor. 14:32-34
 3. This reminds us of the **singular** nature of the acts of worship today.
 - a. It would have been "confusing" if the congregation started singing OR praying WHILE the prophets were speaking.

- b. It would have been confusing if the prophets were speaking WHILE they were eating the Lord's Supper.
- c. It would have been confusing if two different song leaders were attempting to lead two different songs at the same time.
- d. Likewise, it would have been confusing if someone led a song during the prophets' message, OR eating the Lord's Supper, OR making their contribution to the church.

C. The third word that relates to our study is the word **ORDER**. 1 Cor. 14:40

- 1. This confirms the truth that EACH action of the congregation was to be distinctly separate from other actions,.
- 2. The word is used in Luke 1:3, to show the "consecutive order" (NASB) or "orderly" (NKJ).
 - a. Luke did not write one statement on top of the other, but were made in "consecutive order."
 - b. This would help to avoid "confusion", just as the Corinthians were to avoid confusion.

D. The fourth word we need to consider is the word **DIVISION**. 1 Cor. 11:18

- 1. Paul discussed "heresies" that were in the Corinthians church, AS "when they came together therefore into one place," as they were mixing their love feasts with the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. 11:19-21
- 2. Paul wanted a **separation** of these activities, and not to be done together, as they did not belong together, to be done at the same time.
 - a. Does the Lord's Supper and the singing belong together, to be done at the same time"
 - b. Does the making of an offering and the preaching go together in this manner?
 - c. Does the making of an offering and the singing of hymns belong together?
 - d. Does the preaching of the word and the Lord's Supper belong together?
 - e. Does the making of an offering and singing belong together?
- 3. These acts of worship may go together **in that** they are consecutive or in order, but NOT to be performed at the same time, for that would be "confusing."
 - a. As we sing, we should concentrate on the message of the songs.
 - b. As we hear preaching, we are to concentrate on the word of God.
 - c. As we commune, we are to have our mind's on the Lord's death.
 - d. As we give, we need to think about the offering, and not another message or thought suggested by the words of a hymn being sung at the same time.

CONCLUSION

- I. It follows, that **IF** we can do 2 actions of worship simultaneously, what is to keep us from doing 3 or 4 or all 5 at the same time??
 - A. Seemingly, some are either too pressed for time to do these things consecutively, or we are borrowing the practice from the denominational world, or we are just trying to be different and "spice up" the worship.
 - 1. We do not believe that the practice we are opposing is wide spread in churches of Christ, but it is an issue in some places.

2. It is apparently a matter of little significance to some, and needs to be studied.

3. If ever in visiting a congregation where this practice prevails, the proper thing to do at the moment would do any giving already purposed, and not participate in the singing that is going on at the same time for conscience' sake.

B. The safe and right and revealed thing to do is to keep each act distinct, and not cause offense among those trying to do things the Lord's way, according to His word.

II. As we bring this study to a close, we want to offer the invitation to any who want to become a Christian, or to ask for prayers of the church for sins committed.

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