

## **Living a Fruitful Life**

### **How to give more in church**

**Intro:** We have been talking for the past couple of weeks about how to get more rooted in the word so that we can be more fruitful. In the last couple of lessons we've looked how to get more out of church by worshipping meaningfully. So we've talked about the importance of preparation, concentration, and participation through visualization, interpretation, and appropriation.

But if it is important to get more out of assembling with the saints, it is also important give more in assembling with the saints. All too often people come to worship to get something (and that is o.k.); but we also should come to give something! The assembly affords us a wonderful opportunity to help others get rooted in the word and to encourage them to live a fruitful life for God. This is a part of the purpose of the assembly:

*and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. (Heb. 10:24-25)*

**So, what's your encouragement quotient?**

**Let's assume that everything we give or don't give has an impact for good or bad on those who come here. Let's all evaluate ourselves and see how well we are doing at encouraging or building up others when we meet together. Use the bulletin or take a scrap of paper or mentally add up whether your presence has a positive or negative impact on your family here.**

**We give more—we encourage others by:**

#### **Being present for the services**

According to the verse we just read, our very presence in the assembly has an impact on all others. The Hebrew writer saw a distinct correlation between stimulating the brethren to love and good deeds and each person's presence in the assemblies of the Christians. By being present I give others encouragement to keep serving the Lord. By being absent I may discouragement to others.

Give yourself one plus for being presence at this assembly.

Give yourself one plus if you attended the Bible classes this morning.

Give yourself a minus if you could have, but just didn't come.

Give yourself one plus for each other service you plan to attend this week (Sun. p.m. and Wed. p.m.)

If you could have come to the other services and just don't plan to, give yourself a minus. You're absence will be discouraging to the others who come.

Being present is a great start in encouraging others; but there much more that we can do!

**Showing genuine enthusiasm and involvement in the worship and teaching.**

In one picture of the early church, we see that the edification of the whole group depended upon the participation of all.

*What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. (1 Cor. 14:26)*

Though we don't make use of these gifts of the Spirit, we can still look for ways to show enthusiasm and involvement in the worship and teaching.

Bible class

Give yourself another plus if you prepare for your Bible class by working on your lesson and getting ready to learn from the text. If you don't typically get your lesson, take away a point because that will not encourage those around you to prepare and it may discourage the teacher who put a lot of time getting ready for the lesson.

If you made a comment or asked or answered a question in class give yourself another plus. It encourages others to see your interest and involvement.

If after the lesson you continued to discuss the lesson with anyone give yourself a plus. Your continued enthusiasm for the Scriptures will have a good impact on others.

Worship assembly

If you made a special effort to sing enthusiastically, give yourself a plus. If you could hardly be heard by the person next to you, give yourself a minus.

If you said or thought "amen" at the end of the prayer and really meant it, give yourself a plus one; if not, a minus.

If you are using your Bible during the sermon or taking notes give yourself one plus.

Give yourself a plus if you knew what your children were doing in the service and they were behaving properly. Give yourself a minus if you did not know where your children were and what they were doing or if they were causing a distraction by their behavior.

Our overt expressions of enthusiasm that others can see and hear will have will encourage others; indifference discourages others. Zeal is contagious. Each of us can make a difference.

But we can also encourage others before and after the assembly.

**Using the time before and after the service to show interest in the needs of other people.**

*Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Heb. 13:1-2)*

We can give a great deal of encouragement to others by simply noticing what is going on in their lives, letting them know we are praying for them in times of trial and by expressing interest in their concerns. Let them know that you care about them.

Add one plus if you got here early enough to greet and talk with the brethren before the worship started.

Add another plus if you plan on staying longer than five minutes afterward to greet visitors and encourage members.

Give yourself a minus if you got here late and plan to leave as soon as the service is over.

Add a plus for each visitor you welcomed or assisted.

Give yourself a minus if you were near one of our visitors but did not speak to them. Give yourself another minus if you didn't know we had visitors this morning.

Add one plus if you inquired about the condition of someone who has been having problems.

Add another plus if you indicated that you said something to encourage someone having problems such as that you had been praying about their needs.

Add another plus if you offered to help them with the problem in some way.

There are just some of the ways we can use the time we have while we're together.

**Acknowledging and expressing appreciation for those who have made special efforts for the benefit of us all.**

*But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. (1 Thes. 5:12-13)*

Give yourself a plus if you expressed appreciation to a teacher this morning or to someone who shared a good comment in class or plan to do so after the service.

Give yourself a minus for every critical remark you made to or about another person before or after the service.

Give yourself a plus for every person who you sought to thank for something they've done in service to the Lord's work this week.

No one who serves the Lord should do it for the praise of men; but it is surely encouraging when others acknowledge the efforts that people may make to serve others in a meaningful way.

**Talking with others about the Lord's work and what we can do to accomplish more.**

*“let us stimulate one another to love and good deeds...”*

Give yourself a plus if you plan to go to your group meeting and participate in the good works that are suggested.

Give yourself a plus if you invited or plan to invite others to do something together related to the Lord's work this week.

Give yourself a plus if you discuss arrangements for visiting, for Bible study, for acts of service to others during the week.

A part of what we do in our assemblies is discuss how we may further the cause of the Lord during the week.

**Conclusion: So take a moment to do your math. So, how did you do? I should hope that most of us would have many plusses on our paper now. If you scored greater than twenty I would say you are doing an outstanding job of encouraging others. If from ten-twenty, maybe you could look for those little ways to make a difference. If from zero to ten, maybe there are some things you need to correct that are discouraging. If below zero, maybe you should definitely think more about how you could impact others in a positive way.**