

Recalibrating our Definitions

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I believe we have grown so accustomed to services as we know them, that we need to question our assumptions and recalibrate our understanding of many basic concepts. For instance,

- What is worship?
- What is discipleship?
- What is the church?
- Why should Christians meet together?
- What is our mission?

My brief answers to these questions are:

"Worship is a significant conversation with God." By this I mean it has an impact on our obedience to Jesus, and it is a two-way conversation where we also listen and hear. Praying and singing may be helpful, but they are *not* essential ingredients of worship.

"Discipleship is a Spirit filled person listening to and being obedient to Jesus that results in bearing fruit that endures to eternal life." It is not learning about Jesus, or living a good and moral life, or faithfully attending church.

"The church is literally the *assembly*, which derives from the governing body of a community. It is not simply a Christian version of the synagogue; it has a different purpose. It is a meeting of the disciples of Jesus in a locality for the purpose of transforming its wider community."

"Christians should meet together to love one another and encourage one another to love and good works. This should often / usually be in the context of sharing a meal in celebration of His death and resurrection, the presence of His Kingdom and the promise of His return in glory."

"Our mission is to make obedient disciples throughout the nations." Jesus never tried to recruit members; rather He put people off with His outrageous claims and warnings. We are not called to get people to come to church, or believe in God, or live moral lives. There are many who live close to Jesus, but nevertheless do not belong to Him. (Luke 13:26-27 "You will say 'We ate and drank in your presence and you taught in our streets' But I will answer, 'I do not know you. Depart from me...'" The only measure of discipleship that Jesus uses is fruitful obedience. We do terrible harm to the mission of the church by watering down Jesus' words and making Him acceptable.

We pursue our mission by healing and deliverance and declaration the presence of the Kingdom of God to those who do not know Him. We are to go after lost sheep (those closest to us who are not obedient disciples) and to the dark places in our communities." Our mission is *not* to run church services!