

"John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom YE KNOW NOT!" *John 1:26 KJV*



How often have you been at church with thoughts of doing this or talking to someone about that while the thought of meeting with your Lord never crosses your mind? We call it the "Lord's House," the "Lord's Day," but we walk into the Assembly, minds still clamoring with the cacophony of our life! Even Pastors are not immune. We pester them with this and that while they are trying to stay focused on their message from the Word of God. If you want God's Word from God's Man, don't pollute the conduit with your worldly cares. After the sermon and singing is a better time. I know, in many small churches the pastor is the MC of the service, but I believe many are unnecessarily burdened with "keeping track" of this and that – waiting tables, as it were. Church has become more of a social club than "two or three gathered together in [Jesus'] name!" God's Word says, "Be still! And know that I am God." Are our thoughts "still" when we assemble or are we too busy socializing to listen to God? We say we assemble to honor the One who we ignore for the better part of the time we spend together; more interested in how is so and so or what's going on? These are not bad things, but there are telephones, and don't get me started on cellphones in Church!!! I've gone to "Church" for many years yearning for a brother or sister to truly fellowship with at the Lord's Table and found them woefully absent in the Lord's Assembly! Do you discuss the sermon or something else? "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Do we gather in the name of Jesus? He is there, albeit ignored by most if we are truly gathered in His name. He should be the entire focus of attention. Sports, business, weather, illness, current events, schedules, and circumstances are not "the fellowship of the brethren" and should be all forgotten and discarded in favor of and in deference to the Savior and His Word! Is Jesus ever invited to meet with us! We make great show of honoring Him, but our hearts are far from Him. Do we think of the words of the hymns when we sing? "I Surrender ALL?" Really??? The altar is the best indicator of whether Christ is in the midst or not. His righteous presence should truly reveal our shortcomings and force us to our knees every time we meet. There should be no need for the Pastor to plead for folks to come to the altar and get things settled. It would happen spontaneously if the Holy Spirit moved and convicted hearts. "Quench not the Spirit" is a command that upon which we too often put a personal focus, but never consider that it is when we assemble that we are the guiltiest. We bring all the chaos of daily living right into the assembly! Bring your cares to Jesus by making Him the focus of attention. Feast around the Bountiful Savior and His Word. He will erase all care from your furrowed brow if you sit and bask in the glow of His presence!

Just a glimpse of glory bright,
As we gather in His Light,
Reminds us of our future fate,
On other side of Heaven's gate. -CGP

Dare we leave our troubles at the door? Dare we devote our time to the Way, the Truth, and the Life? The Assembly that meets with Christ will experience a taste of eternal ecstasy and a glimpse of Glory! Is Christ really among us? Does our conduct and conversation reflect that?

"The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God... For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:16, 18 KJV