

Potpourri Of Arguments Regarding Fellowship Halls

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Jesus fed the multitudes, so that gives us authority for the church to fund potlucks and other types of meals.

Someone once said, "That which proves too much, proves nothing at all." Jesus also healed people, so does that mean the church should invest in pharmaceutical companies, or run a clinic in its worship facilities? Jesus made wine for a wedding party, so should the church run a catering business, or operate a vineyard? Jesus feeding the multitudes is not a parallel to congregational activity, because He was not even operating under the concept of the church. It is more likely a parallel to what an individual may do. The obligation of hospitality rests upon the individual Christian (Hebrews 13:2).

The early church did facilitate social meals. Just look at Acts 6:1.

This also is out of context, since this was not a recreational meal sponsored by the church in Jerusalem. It was an act of benevolence for widows (who were already members of that congregation) who needed support. Fellowship halls and gymnasiums are not designed to help those who are hungry and poor, but for those who are already well-fed and prosperous.

What about social meals mentioned in Acts 2:46, or the love feasts of 2 Peter 2:13 and Jude 12?

First, the very context states such social meals were from "house to house", just as Paul would have argued based on 1 Corinthians 11:34. Second, the term "love feast" is too broad a term to apply to church-sponsored social meals. Could the love feast be a metaphor for the abundant character of congregational affection? Could it not be referring to the communion? Besides, using the Bible to define the Bible would lead us back to Paul's universal teaching on drawing a line between the social and the spiritual (1 Corinthians 14:37).

You guys just think the building is sacred.

The fact that our Christianity is expressed away from the building, and our social activities occur in our homes and in the community has nothing to do with us believing the building is sacred! It has more to do with respect for Bible authority. There is a sacred work that must be done by the church, and we use our building exclusively for that sacred work, not for social activities and games. Our building is used for edification (Hebrews 10:24-25), which involves worship and Bible study; evangelism (1 Timothy 3:15), in activities such as preaching, teaching, and gospel meetings; and benevolence (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

The Bible never says we can't have fellowship halls or other social facilities. I just don't think it's that important.

The argument based on the negative is never one that is tenable. In fact, others have tried using the “no information” argument before, and it has failed them. The silence of the scriptures does not give permission in any matter (Leviticus 10:1-3, *“Which the Lord had not commanded”*; Matthew 15:1-9; Acts 15:22-24, *“To whom we gave no instruction”*; 2 John 9). Not caring about a subject is no different. Nadab and Abihu did not care about the specificity of the fire to be used in the incense offering (Leviticus 10:1). Uzzah did not care that the Ark of the Covenant was on an ox-cart, and he died for his lack of respect. 2 Samuel 6:7 states that it was for his irreverence that he died. Does a lack of respect for Bible authority also sound a bit irreverent?

The Real Contradiction

It is argued that we contradict ourselves since we have a water fountain, or the preacher eats lunch in his office, or a member brings a snack while printing off class material during the week, or that we use our lobby to socialize. The issue, however, has never been about those kinds of things. Anybody can see that those are vastly different things than designing a room for purely social activities. In this whole discussion, people often overlook the real contradiction. Think about this: if a church can build a place to recreate and partake of purely social activities, then where does it stop? Where do we draw the line? At church hot tubs? At church bowling alleys? At church meat-packing plants? Find the scriptural authority for any of these facilities! We must be careful, friends, to avoid hypocrisy ourselves. Is there Bible authority for the kind of facilities we maintain, and how we use them? Are we following a pattern of expedients properly? Are we trying to blur the line? Or do we exist as the church of God, to be the church of God, and to do the work of the church of God?