

Physical Pandemic Distractions In A Spiritual Worship

By Michael Wright

I'm not one to have a whole lot of confidence in our modern day news or media outlets. After examining the evidences since March 2020, it seems the media has been hyping up the COVID-19 Pandemic to the point of striking fear in a lot of people. Sadly affecting brethren, to the point of taking measures that have disrupted the ability, to worship God, in non-distracting peace.

Sunday morning (August 9, 2020), my family and I gathered with brethren while traveling, for Worship. Upon entering the building, we were masked and directed on where to sit (up front and to the left side). As we were walking (single file), one member of my family began to briefly visit with an elderly sister-in-Christ, and in just a few seconds one of the men serving as a deacon, came down in a hurry to where we were and waved his arms, plus raised his voice, to get our attention, and stated something to the affect of "hey, hey, hey, we can't have this" and redirected my family to the pew we should be sitting.

This immediately struck me as uncomfortable, offensive and distracting, to my preparation for spiritual worship. Shortly afterwards, he yelled across the auditorium, in a firm and very instructive military fashion, to another man aiding in directing those entering the building, and said something similar to, "we can't have this, people can't visit, they need to be directed to sit immediately!".

I began to silently pray for help in focusing my thoughts on the spiritual matters that belong to God ([Matt.22:21](#)), and not upon the awkward disruptions by this one man. Sadly I struggled to do so. My mind was racing between the words of the songs we were singing uncomfortably through a mask, to Biblical principles that contradicted the behavior of this distracting man.

I have been blessed from men of the past, with gospel instruction and counsel, that we need to have God's blessings or God's permission, or Bible Authority, for every single thing that we do.

At my earliest opportunity, I began to recall those Bible passages, in contrast to this mornings awkward, distracting experience, and will attempt to write these down for your considerations.

For certain, we can't adopt secular practices into our spiritual worship. We need to very cautiously,

- **"PROVE all things, HOLD fast that which is **GOOD**" ([1Thess.5:21](#)).**
- We need to put our **"APPROVAL** (on the) things that are **EXCELLENT**" ([Phil.1:10](#)).
- **"RECEIVE the word with all **READINESS** of mind, and **SEARCH** the scriptures **DAILY**, (to prove or determine) **whether** those things were so." ([Acts 17:11](#)). **"STUDY** to shew thyself approved unto **God**, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **RIGHTLY** dividing (or handling aright) the **WORD** of Truth" ([2Tim.2:15](#)).**
- We cannot think of men **"above (or beyond) that which is written"** ([1Cor.4:6](#)).
- **"The scripture(s) canNOT be broken** (or violated)" ([John 10:35](#)).
- We cannot add to, nor take away from scripture ([Deut.4:2](#); [Prov.30:6](#) & [Rev.22:18-19](#)).
- We must **"observe ALL things"** ([Matt.28:20](#)) or abide in the teachings of Christ ([2Jn.9](#)).

Some principles I recalled are,

A. The Expedience Principle.

The definition of expedience is:

- “That which serves to promote or advance” [Webster New Twentieth Century Dictionary (Unabridged); page 616; Standard Reference Works Publishing (1956)]
- In other words, expedience aids to accomplish a particular task.

For something to be expedient, it must do two things:

It must first be **LAWFUL** or **Biblical**:

- “All things are **LAWFUL** unto me, but all things are not **EXPEDIENT**: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” ([1Cor.6:12](#)).

Secondly, for something to be expedient, it must **BUILD UP** or **EDIFY**:

- “All things are **LAWFUL** for me, but all things are not **EXPEDIENT**: all things are lawful for me, but all things **EDIFY not**” ([1Cor.10:23](#)).

To serve as an example, one might consider “when can christians meet for worship”?

FIRST, one must consider what is **LAWFUL**?

- The first day of the week ([Acts 20:7](#); [1Cor.16:2](#)).

SECONDLY, one must consider what would **BUILD UP** or **EDIFY**?

- Could christians meet for worship at 3:00am on Sunday morning? Well, it would certainly be lawful, because it would be on the first day of the week – But would it edify or build up? It is not likely that anyone would be very edified, by assembling for worship at 3:00am in the morning. Most christians that I know, meet some time between 9:00am and Noon on the first day of the week, because that time frame is edifying for most.

B. The church – its Purpose

- “unto Him *be* **glory** **IN** the **church** **BY** Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” ([Eph.3:21](#)).

Hence we are to please God, not ourselves.

The church doesn’t exist to entertain themselves, but to glorify God.

The church glorify’s God by making known, God’s wisdom or Truth ([Matt.28:18-20](#); [Phil.1:5](#); [Rev.3:8](#); [1Tim.3:15](#)).

- “Herein is my Father **GLORIFIED**, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye **BE** my disciples.” ([Jn.15:8](#)).

C. The church – its Work

- Preach to the Lost ([1Thess.1:8](#)),
- Preach to the saved or edify the saved ([Eph.4:16](#); [1Cor.14:5](#)),
- Provide benevolence to christians (saints) who are in need ([1Tim.5:16](#); [Acts 2:44-45](#); [Acts 4:32-35](#); [Acts 6:1-6](#); [Acts 11:27-30](#); [Rom.15:25-31](#); [1Cor.16:1-3](#); [2Cor.8:1-4](#); [13-14](#); [2Cor.9:1](#); [13-14](#)).

D. The church – its Worship

- Pray ([1Tim.2:8](#); [Acts 2:42](#); [1Cor.14:16](#); [Col.4:12](#); [James 1:6-8](#)),
- Sing ([1Cor.14:15](#); [Eph.5:19](#); [Col.3:16](#)),
- Remember the death of the Son of God, through the Lord’s Supper ([Matt.26:26-29](#); [Mk.14:22-25](#); [Lk.22:19-20](#); [1Cor.11:20-34](#)),
- Preach ([Acts 20:7](#); [Acts 20:1](#); [Acts 20:20,27](#)),
- Give ([1Cor.16:2](#); [2Cor.9:7](#); [Acts 20:35](#); [Matt.16:24](#); [Mk.12:41-44](#); [2Cor.8:9](#)).

With these principles, some thoughts come to mind...

- **How does the COVID-19 social distancing practices, aid in carrying out the commands, and patterns related to the responsibility to the Worship, Work or Purpose of the church?** Remember, an expedient aid, MUST be biblical or lawful, but it must also edify.

Wearing a mask and being rigidly policed by brethren, is certainly **NOT** edifying. The religion of Christ is **NOT** a forced religion; that would be the muslim religion. One must “**obey from the heart**” ([Rom.10:16](#)), not by force, yet some want to force and police physical, social distancing practices, in a spiritual assembly? **Such ought NOT to be so!**

Look, I’m old enough to know (and you are too), when we need to use the restroom and we are old enough to know when to voluntarily stay home, so we don’t get each other sick. We all do this during the flu season. Some congregations have clearly been negatively influenced by the liberal media, by buying into the fear of something they can’t see, rather than living by faith ([2Cor.5:7](#); [Matt.10:28](#)).

- **Somebody says, “well, we need to be considerate for the elderly or those with underlying conditions”.** If for conscience sake, one is worried about catching a virus, THEY should wear a mask, but ALL saints should NOT be required or forced to wear a mask. For some, the mask is a little claustrophobic, in addition to affecting one’s ability to breath and sing freely.
- **Somebody says, “our city or judge has placed these social distancing practices as law, and we would be violating [Romans chapter 13](#), with regard to our obligation to being subject to the civil government.”**

When one considers the principle declared in [Acts 5:29](#), that God comes before civil government and the other “**God FIRST**” principles ([Matt.22:37-39](#); [Matt.6:33](#); [Matt.10:37](#)), and couples those Truths with spiritual things that belong to God ([Matt.22:21](#)), such as spiritual worship ([Jn.4:24](#)), one should come to the realization that even though civil government has “social distancing practices” as law, brethren can assemble in a way that is not forced or policed and therefore non-distracting, for spiritual worship of ALMIGHTY God, without violating [Romans chapter 13](#).

Brethren, If a thing such as social distancing practices, are distracting to our spiritual worship, and my worship on the morning of August 9, 2020 **WAS** distracting, then it should **NOT** be done.

NOTHING physical or expedient should ever be made a priority over the spiritual.

We will close with another observation, and that is, there are brethren throughout the country, that are so scared of something they cannot see (failing to live by faith [2Cor.5:7](#)), that they are canceling spiritual worship ([Jn.4:24](#)), or neglecting “the assembling of ourselves together”, And that also, **ought NOT to be so**. Please don’t ever forget Hebrews chapter 10, verses 24 and 25.

- “and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is**; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” ([Heb.10:24-25](#))