



when he told Timothy, **“what you have heard from me... entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”** (2 Tim. 2:1-2). As we look back to the book of Acts we find the early church evangelizing the world. For instance, Acts 13 records the Church at Antioch sending out Paul and Barnabas for the work of evangelism. We must never forget that it is the work of the Church to uphold and spread the truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

Is a free baseball game an adequate form of evange-

lism? I know the idea is often that things like this are aimed at opening the door to future evangelism, but does watching a game save souls? If the Church is going to save souls it will not be through entertainment and recreation, but it will be through the living and active word of God which is **“sharper than any two-edged sword”** (Heb. 4:11-12).

CONCLUSION

A look into the pattern that God has prescribed shows us there are three things the Church is called to do: 1) edify the saints, 2) provide for needy saints, and 3) teach lost souls the good news of Christ. This is the pattern we find established in Scripture. Just as the designer is flawless, it is inconceivable to think that we can improve upon the Church designed by God (Gal. 1:6-9). A baseball game put on by the First Presbyterian Church may seem like a fun evening, but it is far from what the Bible depicts as the Church’s work. This is not the type of event Christ wants His Church to be organizing. It is not a spiritually edifying experience, it does not provide for the physical needs of the saints, and it does not adequately promote the Gospel. We should always be careful to follow the pattern of God as we strive to please Him in the Church He built.



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ISSUE

15.26

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

June 30
2013



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

Is This the Work of the Church?

By Andrew Dow

A couple of weeks ago the First Presbyterian Church in Amarillo used a shameless promotion in order to get its name out to the community. An advertisement bearing the church’s name explained that on Wednesday, June 19th they were sponsoring a “Free Amarillo Sox Game.” I couldn’t help but ask a few questions as I read the flyer. What is the point of this type of promotion? Is this a true attempt to reach the lost or just a way to entertain the masses? While our Lord hung on the cross dying for His church, is this really the work He thought the Church would be engaging in? Is this the work of Christ’s church?

The Church, as it was designed by God, is an amazing creation. When man begins to alter what God has planned, the design becomes skewed and it no longer works in the way that it was intended. It should be our aim and goal to model the Church after God’s original design found in Scripture. That being said, what is the work of the church we find established in the Scripture? The work of the church is three-fold: edification, benevolence, and evangelism.

EDIFICATION

The word “edification” finds its roots in a word referring to building up a house. When we talk about edifying someone, we are speaking of *building them up*, encouraging them, or strengthening them. This

is exactly what the Bible depicts as the work of the church. The church is to maintain and strengthen the saints that comprise the local body.

Paul shows that edification is the work of the church in Ephesians 4:11-12. We find that the Lord provided apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers **“for building up the body of Christ”** (ESV). In addition to these provisions, God also provided elders as a means to edify the Church. As Paul was giving his last encouragement to the elders



Olsen Park church of Christ

of Ephesus he told them of their duty to admonish and build up the church (Acts 20:28-32; cf. Heb. 13:7, 17). It is clear through the provisions God has given the Church that it was always intended to be a source of edification for the saints.

Consider also that the worship of the Church is designed so as to build up Christians. Paul tells us that we are to be **“admonishing one another... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”** (Col. 3:16). We are told elsewhere that we are to **“consider how to stir one another up... not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another”** (Heb. 10:24-25). How great a responsibility we have to each other. When we come together to worship are we concerned with ourselves and how the worship makes *us* feel, or are we concerned with those around us? We ought to always strive to edify those around us so that we can fulfill the work of the church.

I can't help but wonder what type of true spiritual edification goes on at a baseball game. That's not to say there is anything wrong with going to a baseball game. Certainly a game can be fun and entertaining, but is there any lasting spiritual value to watching a baseball game? Attending a baseball game is not the work of the church. Sponsoring a ball game doesn't truly edify the Church of God.

BENEVOLENCE

Benevolence is another work in which the Bible authorizes the Church to engage. Benevolence is simply “good will.” When we speak of doing benevolence or performing benevolent acts we are speaking of doing good to others. The divine plan of God never ceases to amaze me because God leaves nothing out of His plans. He provides for the spiritual well-being of the church through edification, and He sees fit to provide for its physical well-being through benevolence.

There are a number of examples that show us benevolence is an important work of the church. Throughout the book of Acts we find examples of Christians looking out for one another so that **“there was not a needy person among them”** (Acts 4:32-37). Paul told the Romans that he was **“going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints”** that had been collected from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (Rom. 15:25-26). In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 Paul makes it clear that the Church should make a diligent effort to provide benevolence for those in need.

As strange as it may sound, however, the church is not directed to give freely to anyone in need. God has set a pattern for us to follow. First, it is important to note that the church is only authorized to offer benevolence to fellow Christians. The Scriptures indicate over and over again that these types of funds are for the relief of needy *saints* (Rom. 15:25-26; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor 8:1-4; 9:1). There are plenty of needy people throughout the world, but the work of the church as a body is to care for its own. Certainly, Christians as individuals are to do good to others as we have opportunity (Gal. 6:10), but the work of the church and the responsibility of individuals is not always the same. Second, Paul shows Timothy that there are further stipulations put upon who can receive these funds in 1 Tim. 5:9-16. Paul writes, **“If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows”** (5:16). Thus, even if a believer is in need, he is only to be cared for by the church if there is no other means of financial support.

The plan of God is still a perfect one. The people of God are to care for each other so that all have their physical needs provided. I ask, is a free baseball game on Wednes-

day night providing for a true physical need? Does it provide for the needs of the saints? I would suggest that a baseball game is far from a need, and the fact that they offered it to the entire community blatantly contradicts God's word.

EVANGELISM

The third work that the church is to be engaged in is evangelism. The church is certainly to care for the spiritual and physical well-being of the saints, but perhaps its greatest work is saving lost souls. This work can be easily overlooked, but it must remain a priority in the Church.

We mentioned earlier the gifts that God gave the church in Ephesians 4. One of those gifts was that of an evangelist. Again, we see the Lord providing what the Church requires to fulfill its needs. When we look back into the gospel accounts isn't evangelism what God has always expected of His people? In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus commands His disciples to **“go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”** Paul shows us how evangelism is to work