

## **Preparing for a Gospel Meeting**

### **09-20-15 PM**

The term “Gospel meeting” is one many people are not familiar with. Denominations describe the same idea (a special, extended time together to have the gospel preached) as a revival. It is a time when a unique speaker or message is brought over a unique length of time. Its purpose is to edify the saved and evangelize the lost. Our authority for special meetings in in places such as Acts 14:21-22 or Acts 18:23.

The late HE Philips wrote about the history of Gospel meetings in churches in the US.

*“As a young man I spent hours talking to older preachers about their experiences in preaching the gospel.....They were sometimes referred to as "Protracted Meetings" because they continued over a period of time. They were sometimes designated "Evangelistic Meetings" because the main purpose was to reach denominational people and those who belonged to no church. They were (also) called "Tent Meetings" in some localities because they were conducted under tents year after year ...gospel meetings were conducted in school houses, court houses, barns, in brush arbors, tents and occasionally in denominational buildings. The purpose in those meetings was to convince and convert alien sinners to Jesus Christ. Usually large numbers were baptized during the course of each gospel meeting, because the preaching was true to the word and plainly spoken.....During this period gospel meetings nearly always had day (morning or afternoon) services and evening services every day of the meeting. The preaching was distinctive and forceful. Sermon subjects expressed Bible matters. Doctrinal error was exposed and immorality was condemned without apology. Obedience was emphasized in clear language with Bible examples. Every member was interested in his relative and neighbor to hear the gospel of Christ, and they brought them to meetings night after night..... I believe several factors merged to make them as successful as they were: - The war turned many to religion to seek God for a solution for their problems that grew out of divided families and the anxieties of war.....- The militant attitude of most churches of Christ during the years immediately following the war.”*

What Bro. Phillips describes has never been my experience with meetings. Perhaps you too see this, and ask “what changed?” In part, society has changed. We are no longer afraid of the future. We are too affluent to be concerned with spiritual matters, or too ignorant because of false teachers. Too among brethren things have changed. There are more worldly influences that draw us away. Many have a distinct lack of interest in Biblical growth. Finally, we are not a people used to making sacrifices.

### **A Gospel Meeting is a Test of Your Commitment to Christ**

Is it possible you do not have an interest in a Gospel meeting? Why the Lack of Interest? Are you not interested in spiritual growth? Are you not interested in seeing others saved or in encouraging brethren? To be fair, Gospel meetings require us to make sacrifices we are unused to making. They call for our time, our attention and our comfort zones

First there is the Sacrifice of Your Time. Clearly a Gospel meeting takes our time. But is it really much? 8 extra hours a year? Ask yourself what did Christ give in time for you? "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). Really, we are not sacrificing a lot with a meeting.

Then there is the Sacrifice of Your Comfort. The period of relaxing after work is lost for a few days; the hectic schedule of work and meeting. But remember that Jesus said "*Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 10:32). Think that if nothing else, your presence sends this message: to your brethren: you are important; To your friends: faith is important.

A gospel meeting is a test. It measures how worthy we consider Christ of our sacrifices. Philippians 2:5-9 is a powerful incentive to make those sacrifices to the service of our God.