

Tradition by Ron Graham

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,” *Acts 2:46*. The early Christian believers got together every day, and they broke bread together, prayed together, and sold what they had so they could share with other believers who had more of a need than themselves. Their Christian experience was daily, joyful, and simple – good examples for us Christians to follow today.

What we notice right off is that these early Christians were overwhelmed with thoughts of Jesus Christ as they fellowshiped every day. They rendezvoused as Christians in the Temple. Matthew Henry tells us that “Though they met with the Jews in the courts of the temple, yet the Christians kept together by themselves, and were unanimous in their separate devotions.” Even after the temple was destroyed in 70 AD they still continued daily in one accord, but met exclusively in their homes. It wasn’t until almost 400 AD that Christians began to fellowship in buildings other than their homes.

Church tradition has come a long way in the last 2,000 years. Most of what is done these days behind the doors of Christian Churches is not so much biblical as traditional. Simply put, years of man’s doctrines have crept into our Christian Churches. Even though we practice something every week doesn’t mean it is necessarily biblical. And you’ll never really achieve any real understanding of your Bibles by simply sitting through three songs and a thirty minute message by a pastor on Sunday mornings. Never be afraid to simply open your Bible and begin a study. If done diligently and prayerfully, God will direct you and provide you with understanding.

“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” *Hebrews 10:25*. This is the verse that so many choose to use whenever they are confronted with Christian believers who worship in their own homes in lieu of assembling in a big white building somewhere. Sometimes it’s actually used to condemn Christians who prefer home worship. Whether folks worship Christ together as a congregation of fifty or an assembly of five it’s still worship.

“Not forsaking” means we aren’t to abandon or desert (leave behind the brethren), and “assembling ourselves together” means we are to gather together in one place. This can be easily accomplished by getting together with our loved ones and worshiping God in our homes, every day.

We have grown accustomed to assembling with a huge throng of believers and non-believers alike. In the case of the early Church, though, they got together with other believers every day and they communed together, they prayed together, and God added souls to the church daily. Wow, even while worshiping in their homes?

In our homes, as neighbors join neighbors to hear the word, there may be more intimacy with God, and much more dialogue and closeness of worship. The prayers might be more spontaneous and fluent in the smaller home worship groups, and Jesus would certainly be there. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (*Matthew 18:20*).

So why do I seem to be against hundreds of years of Church tradition? Actually I’m not. But I do

believe, very strongly, that one day, very soon now, all those who are truly born again believers in Christ will need to discontinue holding worship services in those big, highly visible and expensive buildings. We will need to go back to the roots of Christianity – coming together and breaking bread daily in our own homes.

I believe Christians will be forced into a sort of undercover mode of worship involving perhaps only our immediate family members, and maybe a few close neighbors. It's these Church traditions that many believers are going to have a tough time distancing themselves from in future America as well as other nations.

In many respects the assembling together has become a huge social club designed to entertain the club members. This membership atmosphere which has become the norm in many congregations, and which is now seen in the eyes of many as the Laodicean Church, might well be the church's Waterloo. These folks could well be the ones who will turn against and bring down the organized Christian Church in the last days. Believers might have to give up their coffee shops, book stores, bowling alleys, movie theaters, and all the rest of the unbiblical amenities that have infiltrated our worship halls.

As church traditions have become more commonplace in our services, we can see a moving away from the basic tenets of the Bible. Reading about how the early Christian believers went about meeting together and how their fellowship was centered on our Lord Jesus Christ and the breaking of bread together as a group is inspiring. Today we can see a huge difference as many years of traditions have crept in and become quite the financial beast of burden pulling the heart out of the worship services. Fellowshiping daily keeps coming back to mind.

Paul asked that the believers lay by and store a portion of what God had prospered them so it could be gathered and taken to distribute to the poorer saints. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" *1 Corinthians 16:2*. Since the early church assembled in their homes they had no huge overhead budgets to account for and they were able to help their brothers and sisters in the Lord with their increase.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (*2 Corinthians 9:6-7*). Carefully read these verses – there's not one reference to giving money but we are to give not grudgingly or of necessity, but cheerfully. It can be money, but it can also be our time, our experience, food, clothing, etc. Money is given these days because that's what it takes to pay the mortgage on the buildings and the pastors salaries along with electric bills, but stocking up food pantry's can be done by each believer bringing in a can of soup.

Many Christian congregations have bank accounts holding thousands, some even millions, of dollars. All the while there are believers in many parts of the world suffering from starvation, malnutrition, a lack of warm clothing, or a pillow to lay their heads on. Many more have not even a Bible to read. God will hold us accountable for what we did for the brethren.

Tradition tells us to tithe 10 percent of our income, place that tithe into an offering plate each week,

thus we've done our part. If you are a believer in Christ you are free in Christ to worship and give as you see fit. Tithing is not a New Testament commandment, it's a Church tradition. Giving comes from the heart and we don't need to wait for Sunday services to give. If a congregation holds huge sums of money in their bank accounts they are not relying on God to supply their needs, they are saving up for their wants.

What will become of the believers who are stuck in the traditions of the past as the church is forced underground? What will the individual saint do when the persecution of the Church becomes overwhelming?

These are questions we should address now while we are at liberty to worship as we please. We should take a long hard look at just how important all those traditions really are. If you're one of the ones who doesn't believe the persecution of the Church will ever occur in the US, you may well be living in a dream world. Yes, there will always be those big buildings where people meet, but in the last days they will only be filled with Laodiceans.

Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I'm not attempting to dissuade folks from attending Sunday worship services by any means. There are, I'm sure, many fine congregations out there that are doing a great work for the Lord. I'm only suggesting that all the saints should become aware of the possibility that home worship is also approved of by God. It's not forsaking the fellowship if we have fellowship in our homes. It's just extremely different than what the organized church is accustomed to, traditionally speaking.

Daily worship of our God and Savior Jesus Christ is our faithful duty, and it includes every Christian believer. If Jesus is to be constantly on our minds then we should already be faithfully worshiping Him daily in our homes. But is that the case? Are the majority of believers today consumed with Jesus Christ? That is precisely why I am writing this commentary. If you're not focused on Jesus while going about your daily routines, how will you become focused on Him when the bottom falls out concerning our freedoms here in the US? Mainly, our freedom to worship. When it becomes impossible to worship openly what will become of Christ's Church?

Being prepared for the eventual persecution of the Church is only good sense. Holding to the traditions that have become commonplace in our worship service may not be prudent. Folks, the persecution Jesus spoke about is coming. It's time we as His Church become prepared for whatever the world throws at us.

God bless you all,

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All scripture is from the KJV and God breathed

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