

Don't Come to Church to Get, Come to Serve

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People come and they want to take. They don't come wanting to give, and I've told you about this before. When I was a young Christian first saved, I can remember a guy that I knew was looking for a church, and he had gone and visited one. And I asked him how it went, and he said, "I didn't get anything out of it." And you know, from that day until now, his words have rung in my mind, because I've thought, how often it is that people, when they come into a church they are looking for what they can get. And they leave disgusted, "I didn't get anything." "I didn't get what I think I deserve." Rather than coming to give.

I mean can you imagine if you were there at the stairs. And here comes Jesus down the stairs. (If there was an upper room I'm assuming there were stairs.) Can you imagine Jesus coming down: did you get anything out of that? "No, I didn't get anything out of that." I didn't come to be served, I came to serve. No, I actually went there to give. I went there to teach them. In fact, as I was showing them the emblems of the Lord's supper I said: This is my body which is for you. I washed their feet. You see, give, giving.

I asked a brother if I could tell this story and it has a happy ending. I can remember several years back, one of the guys, I had to meet with him. He unwisely had gone back and spent some time with an ex-girlfriend from his lost days, and I was kind of admonishing him about that. And he said, "Well, you know I got sick, and she brought me soup." "Nobody from Grace has brought me soup when I got sick." I said, "Brother, how many times have you taken soup to others in the church when they've gotten sick?" You know the answer. Now, I've watched this brother since then. He's turned into a servant. I see him serving people all the time.

I think about Jonathan Sanguinetti. He's not here anymore so I think I can freely talk about him. I never heard Sanguinetti complain that he didn't get anything out of the service, or that he thought he deserved something that he didn't get, or complaining about how people wronged him. You know what I would see? I would see him drive up over there and I would see people pile out of his car as he had gone around picking people up. And he would come in happy and joyful. And you would just watch him, and he was constantly giving.

And I'm using it, but there are lots of you that are constantly giving too. I just use him because he's gone and I can speak freely. But that's what it should be like. We need to be thinking.

Now look, it's right, for each one of us as individuals to receive. Because if everybody's doing what they ought to be doing, we ought to be receiving, and giving. But if we come primarily to give, we come primarily to fulfill the responsibility that the author of Hebrews wants us to fill. He doesn't say, "Well, you all need to go to church just wanting to get." He says, "Let love for the brethren continue." Not, let it continue that you ought to think you ought to be getting from the brethren, or come in and be disgusted when you don't get what you think you ought to get from them. He says, "Go to love, let love for them continue." Give yourself and pour yourself out for others. Don't be one of the complainers.

And you know, people can come into churches too, and they can look and they can say, "Well, this church doesn't do 'fill in the blank,' and I'm out of here!" Rather than, you get some people that come in and they say, "Hey! I see a need in this church, and I'm going to fill it!" You see both. And, just to have an ocean of love worked out among – and we might be one of the little pools – these crystal clear, deep blue waters. And this ocean of love. Following in the footsteps of Christ. That's what He wants. Us pouring out our lives for one another. Continue, let this continue.