

Canceling Church

by Steve Higginbotham

The story is told of two preachers who were visiting over a cup of coffee one morning. The first preacher said to the second, "I cancelled our Sunday night services about five months ago." "You did?" the second preacher replied. "What do your church members think?" The first preacher said, "I suspect they'll be pretty upset if they ever find out about it."

The meeting times for worship, study, and edification are not meant to be arbitrary requirements that test the spiritual discipline and commitment level of Christians. Rather, these opportunities are intended to be functional; to encourage, inform, and strengthen those who are trying to walk worthily in an ungodly world.

Some people will say with exasperation, "Oh, great! I've had such a bad week and it's Wednesday night, and I have to get ready for Bible class." But those identical words can be said with excitement and mean the exact opposite. Some might, with excitement say, "Oh great! I've had such a bad week and it's Wednesday night, and I have to get ready for Bible study!"

Why is it that some people can say these words with exasperation while others can say the very same words with a sense of thanksgiving?

The difference in the two is the difference between "form" and "function." If one views church services simply as a "form" that must be checked off his "to-do list," he will see that assembly differently than the one who acknowledges the "function" and purpose of the assembly.

Maybe church members need to re-evaluate the way they view these assemblies; and see them not as an arbitrary requirement, but as an opportunity to grow, learn, develop relationships, encourage and be encouraged.

And maybe church leaders need to re-evaluate function of these assemblies to insure that the assemblies fulfill their intended purpose. The classes and fellowship should be of such a quality that we are not trying to see how much our members can endure because they love God, but actually provide quality and benefit from attending.

Having offered the above as a reminder, I am so thankful, and we are so blessed to be a part of the Karns congregation. I have never seen a higher "return percentage" on Sunday night and Wednesday night. I'm not saying there is no room for improvement, but I've never seen so many take advantage of the opportunities and stay so long following the close of services. It's a testimony to the loving family atmosphere that exists at Karns.