Funerals and Parties

1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Luke 15:21-24

Introduction:

1. In a recent seminar, one of the speakers (Jerrie Barber) said that both individuals and churches need to have more funerals and parties.
   1. Jerrie was saying that we need to mark the end of a number of things and lay them to rest (funerals) and celebrate the many good things that come to us (parties.)
   2. I have become convinced that this advice is good and biblical.
2. In this lesson, we will focus on appropriate times and situations for funerals and parties.
3. THE TIME FOR FUNERALS.
   1. When people die. John 11:35
   2. We are using the term “funeral” to mean the end of a matter.
      1. It is time for some things to die and to be buried.
      2. We do not serve the Lord or ourselves when we avoid appropriate times of termination.
   3. This is true in regard to the individual.
      1. Paul was able to forget “those things which are behind” Philippians 3:13, 14
      2. In our Christian life.
         1. In becoming a Christian. Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:3-8
         2. What about harmful habits, wrong behavior, and improper attitudes? Colossians 3:5-9
         3. But even as Christians there are times when we need to repent and turn away from harmful things in our lives. 1 John 1:9
      3. Children becoming adults. 1 Corinthians 13:11
      4. Marriage. Genesis 2:24
      5. Second marriages. 1 Corinthians 7:8, 9, 39; Romans 7:1-3; Matthew 19:9
         1. Some grief needs to be completed for the first spouse if you want to have room in your bed for the second spouse.
         2. A preacher asked, “Is anybody perfect – without sin?”

One man held up his hand.

The preacher asked, “Do you mean to tell me that you have never committed even one sin?”

“No. I was holding up my hand for my wife’s first husband.”

* + 1. Moving.
    2. Changing jobs.
    3. Retiring.
  1. This principle is also true in regard to congregations. Acts 20:36-38
     1. When people leave.
     2. When there are changes in the eldership.
        1. When an elder resigns, dies, or another one or more are added, the group changes.
        2. If there is not a funeral for the old eldership, there is a good possibility that there will not be a joyful resurrection.
        3. For that reason, I offer my resignation when new elders are appointed.
     3. When there are changes in preachers, youth ministers.
     4. When we build new buildings.
     5. Though the gospel never changes, times do change; this means that programs, means, etc. may need to change, too.
     6. “We’ve done it this way all these years” is not a sufficiently good reason to keep doing a thing the same way.
     7. Some good questions always need to be asked when we are contemplating funerals for programs, methods, etc.
        1. Is there a better way to do this than the way we are presently doing it?
        2. Does the proposed change in any way violate Scripture?
        3. What should we do to prepare people for this change?
        4. Will the anticipated positives outweigh the negatives or vice versa?

1. THE TIME FOR PARTIES.
   1. We are using “parties” to refer to appropriate times of celebration.
      1. Unfortunately, we often focus more on failures than we do successes.
      2. It is not the size of the party but the fact that a success or milestone is marked and recognized.
      3. Our text illustrates an appropriate party, i.e., at the return of the wayward son. Luke 15:20-24
   2. As individuals, we need to punctuate our lives with parties.
      1. We fail sometimes, but we also have successes and we reach milestones.
      2. Jerrie Barber told of buying a plaque for himself for his 30-year anniversary of preaching. He had 1 Samuel 30:6 inscribed on it, “But David strengthened (encouraged) himself in the Lord his God.”
      3. What would be some appropriate times for individual celebration?
         1. Birthdays and anniversaries are natural times, but what about spiritual birthdays?
         2. Have you “kicked” a habit, or overcome a weakness?
         3. Have you done something new and challenging for the first time and succeeded?
   3. As congregations, we also need to punctuate our lives with parties.
      1. Celebrations of successes remind us that all is not dark and dreary.
      2. What would be some appropriate times for congregational celebration?
         1. What about the anniversary of a congregation? (Great Day in May, 105 Years , May 2000).
         2. What about a program successfully carried out?
         3. What about a newcomer’s dinner to welcome those placing membership, being baptized, or being restored in the past six months?
      3. The end (completion) of Paul’s first missionary journey and the report to Antioch sounds a little like a party to me. Acts 14:25-28

Conclusion:

1. Do you need to have a funeral and a party today? Romans 6:1-9
2. Do you need to bury something in your life? Colossians 3:1-9
3. God and the angels are waiting to have a party. Luke 15:7, 10

* Found outline on the internet from Tom Miller, ETSOP