

Business at Church??

Should you make money at church? Are there people there you want to influence toward your business? Is the church building a place to extend your own influence? Surely just being seen there won't hurt? What could be wrong with that?

Well, why don't we just ask Jesus and see what he thinks?

INTRO

Getting the answers to life's more complicated questions is not just a matter of asking the teacher in the classroom. Sometimes it is more than just a formula they could write on the marker board. Sometimes it is not a simple yes or no answer that can be found in a book or Googled. And sometimes the very best answers are demonstrated.

Demonstration is what the greatest of all teachers used to definitively answer the question about making money during church. But the super-teacher Jesus also gave us verbal information too.

When Jesus was visiting with the woman at the well in John 4 ([link to videos](#)), they discussed where to worship. Be aware. We are not going to find a simple yes or no answer in John 4. But the woman said, John 4:19-24 ... "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. (20) Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say (referring to the Jews) that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." (21) Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. (22) You worship what you do not know; we (speaking of the Jews) worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. (23) But the hour is coming, AND IS NOW HERE, when the true WORSHIPERS will WORSHIP the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to WORSHIP him. (24) God is spirit, and those who WORSHIP him must worship in spirit and truth." Notice that I emphasized some words more than others.

But the word "worship" is part of the answer. When you assemble with other people of a similar faith, whatever "brand" that may be, what SHOULD be the purpose of the gathering? Well, that keyword, "worship".

Jesus said that is what should be taking place. True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Jesus added that God is looking for those kinds of people. And he further added that if you are going to honor God with WORSHIP, you will need to do it in a spiritual way, AND in the truthful way God has prescribed.

The gathering can be in many places: A simple structure, in an ornate building, or out under the stars of heaven. But what is the purpose of the assembly? To WORSHIP THE God.

God is the only one being worshipped. He is to be central to every thought, in every word, in every song, through every prayer. I am not pleasing anyone but Him. He is the only one worthy of my praise, my songs, my gift, my joy, my thankful heart. WORSHIP of God is not to be ENTERTAINING to you.

And since the gathering is to focus on HIM, and HIM ONLY, where does business fit in? To be attempting to bring attention to your business, or to watch others as they influence you toward their business, is not pleasing to God.

How displeasing is it? To what degree? To what level?

Let's turn our attention from the woman at the well toward the events of the passion week, Jesus' last week of public ministry. Here we will see his demonstration as to how pleasing or displeasing to God business at worship can be.

Mark 11 tells the story. On Sunday of that week, Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He was worshipped as a conquering, peace-loving king as he rode the foal. Mark 11:11 says, "And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve." But he saw something. What did he see?

Mark 11:15 begins to unveil what he had noticed. "And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. (16) And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. (17) And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."

Without any obvious warning, Jesus reacted to what he had seen the day before. He saw business being conducted in a place that should have been devoted to WORSHIPPING God. And I hope you noticed that Jesus did not physically harm anyone as he disrupted the business being done in a place of worship. He ran out the buyers and sellers. He overturned the tables of the money exchangers, scattering their money everywhere. And those who sold the pigeons used in worship had their seats turned over. Plus, Jesus did not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. No merchandise to be sold. Nothing that was bought.

And if this wasn't clear enough, the violent Jesus stopped long enough to remind everyone about the purpose of the building. It was written in the Old Testament that the temple was to be a "house of prayer for ALL nations". And he put the blame directly on the businessmen and women. "You have made it a den of robbers."

What did Jesus think about doing business in a place of worship? Did he allow "influencers" in the building? What kind of business did he overlook, wink at, or intentionally "not notice"? What would he think about doing business that does not include products being exchanged for money? Would that be an exception? NO

Our original questions were "Should you make money at church? Are there people there you want to influence toward your business? Is the church building a place to extend your own influence?"

When we assemble or gather, what SHOULD BE our purpose? Honoring God, or conducting business.

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We are here because we love you and want only the best for you. I pray God will bless your life. Let's visit again; say tomorrow. Until then, goodbye for now.