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SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

To Gather, Or Not To Gather?

(How to start something simple in an age of complexity)

(SERIES: THE MAXWELL HOUSE SERIES: 01 of 03)
by Dr. David Foster

"A Song of degrees of David. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." (Psa 122:1 KJV)

"...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
(Heb 10:22-25 NIV)

@ the gathering we will . . .

Welcome **everyone as someone.**

"Now the tax collectors and 'sinners' were all **GATHERING** around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' Then Jesus told them this parable: 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.'" (Luke 15:1-7 NIV)

worthy to be **known.**

worthy to be **loved.**

worthy to be **celebrated.**

worthy to be **redeemed.**

Worship **with joy & without apology.**

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.'" (Mat 16:16-18 NIV)

Work hard at **simply being the church in the new world.**

*The new world is **walless** as a result of the **death of distance.***

*The new world is **wireless** as a result of the **internet revolution.***

*The new world is **worn out** as a result of the **complexity and choice.***

"So now I hate life because it is all so irrational; all is foolishness, chasing the wind. And I am disgusted about this--that I must leave the fruits of all my hard work to others."
(Eccl 2:17-18 TLB)

I am not interested building a church . . .

Defined by **bricks and mortar**; open **one day a week.**

Where **respectability** is more important than the **revolution.**

Which looks more like a **walled garden** than a **city on a hill.**

"You are the world's light--**a city on a hill**, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light! Let it shine for all; let your good deeds glow for all to see, so that they will praise your heavenly Father." (Mat 5:14-16 TLB)

But what if we start a movement . . .

Where we **gather for worship** and the **word.**

"'Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.' The woman said, 'I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.' {26} Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am he.'" (John 4:23-26 NIV)

*in an atmosphere of **celebration** . . .*

*where the **spirit** of God and the **word** of God*

*meet the deepest **hunger** of our **broken hearts***

*and the result is **transformation, freedom, and great joy.***

Where we **grow in our love for God** and **each other.**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35 NIV)

Where we practice **random acts of generosity.**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NIV)