CHANGING THE INVITATION

Understand at the outset that our modern day invitation is an invention of our own. No Biblical example for it. But since my earliest days in the church, there has always been one, immediately after the sermon, and sometimes without a sermon. Where we have gotten the idea that it MUST BE is beyond me.

On Pentecost the first gospel sermon saw about 3000 responses, but because they were convicted of their wrong, not because they were “persuaded” to respond. Peter did “testify and persuade” (ASV) but no indication he did anything but preach the word. Understand that “persuade” is a relative term.

In many churches today there is more emphasis placed on the Christian responding to “perceived offenses” and “needing the prayers of the church,” something not mentioned in scripture. Of course we are to pray for one another. James tells us “Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.” (James 5:16) Nothing here demands this to be done in a public way.

It appears that some in the church are trying to measure the “success” of the church by the number of “responses.” Sometimes those are really “emotional,” not based on conviction of wrongdoing. One preacher, during the “invitation song” (something else not mentioned in scripture) walked the isles and “begged” people to respond.

Are we trying for responses or conversions???

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