

## Acts 10:20-21

***Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them." Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"***

If you are guilty of inviting someone to come to church, in hopes that they will give their life to Jesus, then raise your hand. We should all be guilty of this and should have all raised our hands. Yet how often do we do that? I don't mean are you doing it every day, but rather let me rephrase my question. How many times do we invite people to come to church to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, instead of offering them Jesus right then and there?

In today's verse this is the story of the first account of Peter going to a Gentile's home and sharing the gospel. I would encourage you to read this story in Acts chapter 10.

Long story short, Cornelius (a Gentile) saw an angel who told him to have Peter come to his home and share the gospel with him (I'm paraphrasing here). So Cornelius sent a couple men to Peter, ***And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." Acts 10:22***

And what was Peter's response? *"Well, tell him we have services at church on Sunday at nine, eleven and one o'clock and he can come then, and we'll go have lunch afterwards."* If you think about it, how stupid does that sound, yet how often do we say pretty much the same thing when we invite others to come to church to be saved, instead of ministering to them right then and there?

So what did Peter really say or do?

✠ ***Acts 10:23 Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.***

He didn't blow Cornelius off, but rather went to him instead of inviting him to go to church or the synagogue. And the end result that happened in Cornelius' house (not the church) was:

✠ ***Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.***

No worship music, no long 45-minute sermon that Cornelius had to sit through. But rather, Peter shared with Cornelius as well as his household (Family and servants) and the result was that ***"the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word."***

Yet we hear over and over, to invite them to church, invite them to church, invite them to church. But I do not read Jesus teaching us to invite others to church, but rather to share the gospel, which is inviting the lost to come to Jesus for salvation.

Think of it this way, God has put that person on our heart or brought him or her to us so that WE can share Jesus with them, not our pastor. Also, inviting others to church is not a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus; therefore, the same Holy Spirit is in us to testify of Jesus, not to invite them to church to get saved.

So is it wrong to invite the lost to church? Yes and No. Yes, because if God brought someone to us to share Jesus with them, and we diss God's bringing that person to us and pawn them off on the pastor, we are being disobedient to what God wants us to do.

And the No would be that there are times when we have shared Jesus (not about our church) with them, and they haven't given their life to Jesus yet, and maybe they need to hear more of the gospel from someone else, like our pastor or even someone else in the church. So if we shared Jesus with him or her, and they haven't come to Jesus yet, then go ahead and invite them to church.

- † **John 15:26-27** *But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*
  
- † **Acts 5:42** *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*
  
- † **Acts 16:30-32** *And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.*