

Only a Handful? Look Again.

Peter L. Meney | Added: Nov 19, 2012 | Category: Editorial

These few comments are for you who worship with only a handful of believers or are forced, by reason of conscience or convenience, to worship alone in your own home.

It has long been an encouragement to the saints that where two or three are gathered in God's name, the Lord Jesus has promised to be there in their midst. Remember those who gathered on the hillsides of Scotland during the covenanting years, or met in forests of the Soviet Union for fear of the authorities. They did not meet without the presence of their Saviour.

Even where one worships alone the pledge of the Lord is, 'Lo, I am with you always' Matthew 28:20. Those who are housebound, or hospitalised, or even the prisoner in his cell, may be sure that invoking the name of the Lord in worship is not a vain exercise. His spiritual presence is with us to assist us in our worship, to comfort us when discouraged, to supply us with His grace, and to protect and preserve us from evil; which is a great reassurance.

Yet, there is more, if more be needed. Not only has the Lord promised to be with His people, but He does not come alone. When believers go to worship they enter spiritually 'into the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem'. There they join 'an innumerable company of angels'. More, they are accompanied by 'the general assembly and church of the firstborn' which are 'the spirits of just men made perfect' (Hebrews 12:22-23).

When God's people worship they immediately join a heavenly choir more numerous and melodious than any mega-church choral society. When they pray, eyes closed and concentrating on Christ, the empty seats next to them fill with fellow-worshippers of the Most High God. When the gospel is preached enthusiastically, warmly, and sincerely, the hearers are not the few familiar individuals dotted around the room. They are the massed church of the Firstborn, the general assembly of the Lord's redeemed.

I always smile when our little congregation of a dozen souls sings Charles Wesley's rousing hymn, 'O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise.' It may be that in this life you and I never actually get the opportunity to stand in a congregation of a thousand and sing our great Redeemer's praise. But in a finer way, each time we pray or sing the praise of our Saviour we join a throng so numerous, a crowd of witnesses so joyful and glorious that our frail human minds cannot comprehend it.

If you find yourself alone next Lord's Day morning, or if your congregation amounts to but a few faithful souls, do not be discouraged. Spread throughout the land are faithful friends just like you, meeting in small congregations or at home alone, whose fellowship in the gospel is yours.

As you sing, lift up your voice and remember the heavenly choirs with whom you make melody. As you close your eyes and pray, reflect that your thoughts are merging with those of a countless throng in the worship of King Jesus. As you listen to the gospel, remember you are only the most recent generation in a long line of saints for whom Christ preached is light, love and life.

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