

Two Types of Church People

Word

Scripture Reference

3 John 1:5-11

Discussion Questions

1. Think of the first time you came to church. What was the first impression you had about that church?
2. Oftentimes, people feel isolated, anonymous and independent in crowded impersonal places. Unfortunately, people feel this way even in church, which should NOT be. As you welcome the New Year, it is good to self-examine yourself to see if you have improved as a person this past year and how you can improve in this coming year. As part of a community of believers, it is also helpful to examine the type of church you have and how your church represents Christ to the community. You may be one of those who say that there are so many new people you don't know in your church. What is your experience at church? Discuss how you can get to know more people in your church so that you will not feel isolated and anonymous, but be a blessing to them.
3. Think about this: Do you want your church to be known as a community of believers where there is warmth and hospitality, where people can see Christ? This is such an important topic that God dedicates the whole book of 3 John to this subject matter of love manifested in hospitality and warmth. Read 3 John 1:5-8. The apostle John writes to Gaius, one of his spiritual children whom he is proud of, blessing him. What were people saying about Gaius? What virtues could be seen in him that made him a blessing to others? If you look at your own attitude and testimony, would you say that others are blessed as well? Discuss how warmth, kindness and hospitality could be shown collectively as a church? What are the possible results if as a

church, you are warm and hospitable to others, and especially to the new ones coming?

4. Gaius displayed love through hospitality, which was commanded by John and by God for us to emulate. However, in contrast to Gaius was Diotrephes, a church leader who showed the following three attitudes which should NOT be emulated:
 - a. *Politics in the church (v. 9)*. The church is the body of Christ for whom He loved and died for. The church is made up of many types of people who may have differences of opinions, but resolve issues with love and understanding, not with politics and manipulation. Gaius and Diotrephes worshipped together in the same church, but unlike Gaius, John condemns Diotrephes. What were the reasons why John didn't appreciate Diotrephes at all? Why were Diotrephes' actions summed up as politics in the church? Discuss the red flags of how politics could be played up in the church. Why is this very wrong? Why is the church not a place for politics or self-exaltation?
 - b. *Malicious words (v. 10a)*. Diotrephes also spread lies about John with malicious intent and cruelty. Certainly, John condemned it. Idle talk and gossip have no place in the church. The spreading of unsubstantiated facts in the church is something that you need to watch out for. It may be hard to control people who enjoy gossiping, but you should not allow malicious words to be spread. Why is gossiping such a vicious weakness in any situation? What are the issues that people usually love to gossip about in the church? If you hear a gossip, which is usually untrue or exaggerated, how should you handle it so that it will not spread?
 - c. *No hospitality (v. 10b)*. The third thing that Diotrephes didn't do was to show warmth and hospitality to his fellow believers, even to visiting preachers, which showed that he didn't love his fellow Christians. This certainly is in contradiction to the gospel. Aside from not showing warmth and hospitality, what else did Diotrephes do that shows he was indeed a prideful and power-hungry man? What does hospitality mean? How could you, as a church member, show hospitality to others? What would happen if a church doesn't

show love, warmth and hospitality to each other? What would happen if the church does the opposite?

Walk

Tell the sweet story of Christ and His love;

Tell of His pow'r to forgive.

Others will trust Him if only you prove true ev'ry moment you live.

Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing,

Out of my life May Jesus shine;

Make me a blessing, O savior, I pray.

Make me a blessing to someone today.

Verse 11 says, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.” As you examine and evaluate your life, ask God to help you see the good things you’ve done for Him and for others. Thank Him for the opportunities given to you that through His help you were able to be a blessing to others. Then ask the Lord to open your eyes to see the wrong things you’ve done that didn’t please Him nor bless others. What should you do about it? The contrast between Gaius and Diotrephes is glaringly clear and you would most probably choose to be a Gaius. What steps would you take to show forth the love of Jesus Christ to others?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you for everything that you’ve blessed me with in the past year. I pray that the New Year You are blessing me with will be a year that I will grow more in my walk with You, in my relationship with others, in my work and in my service to you. Help me to be like Gaius, warm, loving and hospitable to his fellow believers in the church, to Your servants and to others in general. I know that my natural self-centeredness may get in the way to what You desire me to be, but with Your help, strength and enablement I know that I can be a blessing to others. Thank you Lord. In Jesus’ name. Amen.