

TIME OF SERVICES

Sunday:

Bible Classes	10:00 a.m.
Worship Service	11:00 a.m.
Worship Service	6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Classes	7:00 p.m.
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Office (870) 933-9134

Elders

Kemuel Camp	(870) 930-6970
Scott Stubblefield	(870) 934-8874

Deacons

Phillip Cassidy	(870) 623-2588
Jeff Ladyman	(479) 236-5365
Steve Lands	(870) 974-1976
Travis Moody	(870) 650-1649

Preacher

John Mundy 870-623-5339

Editor

Dick Blackford 870-919-2266

**THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ONLY,
MAKES CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANS
ONLY. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS
COMPOSED OF CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE
NOT JOINED A DENOMINATION.**

StoneRidge Church of Christ

where CHRIST is the chief cornerstone
1 Peter 2:7



Vol. 15, No .38 May 7, 2023

Casual Christianity

Many things have changed over the last 50 to 60 years. How we present ourselves in public is probably one of the biggest. As a child living on the farm, we did not “go to town” every day. Oh, we would go to school, but “going to town” for shopping trips or visits to see someone was never done without first cleaning up and dressing in fresh, appropriate clothes. We knew to “mind our manners,” and to say, “Yes ma’am” and “Yes sir” when addressed. We were to show proper respect for other people and their property, as well as for our parents. Things have changed greatly over the years. Nowadays it is common to see someone wearing pajamas and house shoes in the grocery store, or to see children in dirty clothes running around. Rarely do you hear someone answer “Yes, Sir,” or “No, Sir,” “Yes, ma’am, or “No, ma’am.” Most often you will hear “Yeah” or “Nah,” or maybe “Whatever.”

Things have changed regarding church services as well. Growing up, we were taught to be on our best behavior. We would sometimes be late to services, but we would never think of entering the assembly during the middle of a song, or even more unthinkable, during a prayer. Children beyond the age of 4 or 5 might bring a toy or game, but it was left in the car, only to be brought out after church was over. During assembly we were to sit quietly, even if we didn’t understand everything or always pay attention to the preacher. We knew not to constantly bother our parents or try to talk to others. We didn’t leave our pews to run to the bathroom or to the water fountain every time we had the urge.

. We knew that causing any sort of disruption during the services would →

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cause our parents to be unhappy and have significant consequences. I may have run in the church building after services, but only until I was called down by my parents. When I think about these things, I wonder what has changed? Are people intentionally showing disrespect, or that they have not been taught, or is it that everything has just become too casual? Are we just more relaxed and comfortable with people and ourselves? Or do we not realize that having good manners shows respect for ourselves as well as for others? Do we not have any self-respect? What do these questions, and more importantly the answers, say about us? The word casual can have several meanings. These include things resulting from or occurring by chance; occurring without regularity; feeling or showing little concern; or informal and natural.

These definitions certainly apply to our culture. As noted by the examples above, we are certainly more casual in our appearance and our mannerisms when out in public. I certainly don't mind wearing overalls to the bank or wearing sneakers when I'm out in town. Our present-day culture is casual; we are children of our age; It is inevitable that we reflect it to some extent. However, church services should not be so casual. Below is a list of things that demonstrates a casual attitude:

- Coming sporadically.
- Coming late habitually.
- Not having ourselves or our children ready for classes.
- Being slow to find our seats after class.
- Talking excessively between class and worship services, rather than taking care of visits to the restroom, etc. resulting in coming into the assembly after announcements have begun.
- Interrupting services by talking or fidgeting excessively.
- Letting children disrupt services by repeatedly getting out of the pews, repeatedly running to the restroom, or moving to another seat.
- Bringing coffee, tea, sodas, or containers of water into the building.
- Wearing clothing that is inappropriate, such as shorts and certain graphic T-shirts.



News/Notes/Quotes.

THE SICK. ...**Karen Livesay** has been in the hospital but is now back and home. She requests our prayers...**Jack Ladyman** will be having shoulder surgery soon. ...**Pat Spencer** (Jerry's mom) is now back at home (at Jerry's house) and is some better. ...**Rhea Vines** is now at St. Elizabeth's Place where she is receiving therapy after surgery for a broken leg. Room 608...**Betty Shrable** has been facing some health challenges and has requested our prayers... **Creed Moody** has improved but is still under doctor's care. ...Remember **Virginia Bishop** in your prayers... ...**Charles Wayne French** (Nola Christenberry's brother) continues to battle cancer. **Sandra Stubblefield** will soon have surgery on her hand... Remember our shut-ins: **Madonna Vines** is confined at home.. **Bob** and **Jean Evans** are also confined at home...**Gail Brooks** and **Rita Kieffer** are both at St. Bernard Village...**Shirley Coots** at Lawrence County Nursing (hospice care)... **Joyce Riley** is at St. Elizabeth's Place... Remember all of these in prayer.

GROUP MEETINGS. Group 1 is meeting at the Mellows' and Group 2 is meeting at the Blackfords' , both on **May 20** at 5:30.

SYMPATHY. We extend our sympathy to Austin Shiflett on the passing of his grandmother, Wilma Eubanks.

GOSPEL MEETINGS (Mark your calendar!)
JULY 17-21 -STONERIDGE VBS!!

PODCAST! Hear a lesson from God's word each morning from John Mundy on Facebook & YouTube, 8 am.

CONGRATS GRADUATE! Oops, we left one out last week. Congrats to **Peyton Ellis** on reaching this important milestone. He is graduating from Valley View High School.

Some people treat Christianity like a slot machine, trying to put in as little as possible and always hoping to hit the jackpot.

When a man does not believe in God, the danger is not that he believes in nothing, but that he will believe in anything. (Spurgeon)

Mistreated?

“I was mistreated, so I have a right to be angry and quit ‘the church,’” said a great many, who continue to remind us how mistreated they are and how justified they are in their complaints. Because of bad people, they feel excused from being among the saints.

“I was mistreated, and in the process showed how much I love you and want you to be saved, all the while remaining silent as a lamb before the slaughter,” our Lord could say, whose mistreatment has served as the foundation for our salvation. Because of bad people, He died to save us all. And we are the bad people.

Whose example will we now follow?

“But you don’t know my story,” says another. “And you don’t know mine, either. But we all know Christ’s. And that’s what matters.

-Doy Moyer

“THE WICKED SHALL BE TURNED INTO HELL, AND ALL THE NATIONS THAT FORGET GOD.” Psalms 9:17

“PUT THEM IN FEAR, O JEHOVAH: THAT THE NATIONS MAY KNOW THEMSELVES TO BE BUT MEN. SELAH.” Psalms 9:20

“FOR THE KINGDOM IS JEHOVAH’S: AND HE IS THE GOVERNOR AMONG THE NATIONS.” Psalms 22:28

“BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS JEHOVAH...” Psalms 33:12

“RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION: BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE.” Proverbs 14:34

- Leaving before services have ended.
- Leaving personal items in and under the pews, keeping the building in disarray so that it appears unkempt.

How do these behaviors indicate a casual attitude? Coming sporadically certainly meets the definition of occurring without regularity as if by chance. Coming late habitually suggests that we do not really want to be here. Certainly, we do not treat our secular jobs with the same disrespect. Not preparing for classes signifies the level of importance we place on knowing the word of God. Constant interruptions during services indicates a lack of respect for other people and their service to God. Teachers in our schools do not allow such behavior; why do we think that it is appropriate during the worship of God? Bringing drinks into services and dressing inappropriately says that our personal comfort outweighs the decorum with which we should approach God. We have a water fountain for those who must have something to drink, and I hope we do not attend graduations, weddings and funerals dressed the way I see some come attired to worship God. Leaving before the end of services suggest that we only have a limited amount of time to serve God and that we are not wholly devoted to him.

While the building is not sacred, our treatment of the building is an indication of our respect for the things belonging to God. The church house is not our home, and we should not treat it so.

What is the solution for the casualness which has crept into our services? First, we must remember who we are. We are God’s creation, and we owe Him all the reverence and service we can manifest. We must never forget the awesome nature of God, nor how much lower we are in comparison. Second, we must never forget the debt that we owe for the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. Third, we must understand that the church does not assemble for our enjoyment, but because God has commanded it and He is worthy of our worship and obedience.

We must realize where we are and who is there. When we are assembled with God’s people, we are in His temple. Both the Father and Son are present, so we must act accordingly. We must teach our children, not just to be quiet, but to reverence and respect God. We must set a good example for our children. We need to show interest and attention, and not engage in activities which are secular during services. If we show proper respect for the worship of God, our children will see and learn to do likewise. We should engage them in discussions of their classes and →

on the services at levels they understand.

Please understand that I am not saying we should all be wearing three-piece suits, or that children should be invisible during the assembly. But we must not be casual Christians. -**Scott Stubblefield**

The Roman Empire - Revisited

Some noteworthy things have been said about history, such as: *"History repeats itself"; "History is a great teacher;" "About the only thing we learn from history is that we refuse to learn from history";* etc. The history of Israel was intended as a teacher for Christians. *"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..."* (Rom 15:4). *"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition..."* (1 Cor 10:11).

As trends began to change in the 1960's, the five major reasons for the downfall of the Roman Empire began to circulate. These are found in the five volumes known as *The History of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, Esq. Let us look again and observe.

1. *"The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society."* Today, homes are breaking up at an alarming rate. By the time we could give the statistics they would have already gotten worse. The biblical family is under attack from humanists, homosexuals, and Hollywood. And these three usually overlap. We live in an indulgent society that does not know the word "self-control." A conscious attempt is being made to redefine "home" and "family."

2. *"Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace."* Our government has gotten involved in so many "give away" programs that are not its real purpose that it is out of anyone's control (such as the National Endowment for the Arts, which funds homosexual and anti-Jesus art). The purpose of civil government is fairly simple

when we see what the one who ordained it had to say. Basically, it is to reward the good and punish evildoers (Rom 13:1-7).

3. *"The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal."* If you visit the Roman Colosseum, you will realize how brutal it became. Sports may not be as brutal as they were under the Roman Empire but there is no question that there is a mad craze for pleasure as we see athletes signing \$70 million contracts (and up) and Hollywood celebrities and rock musicians make as much as \$100 million per year. The craze for pleasure is also seen in the problems that come from fornication, homosexuality and drug abuse (birth defects, abortion, juvenile delinquency, STD's, addiction).

"The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy is within - the decadence of the people." Nations have always needed to protect themselves, but a great truth is expressed in the words of that immortal hymn, *Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus*. The third verse says, *"the arm of flesh will fall you, ye dare not trust your own."*

The Roman Empire rotted from the center. Communism also rotted from the center, though it had the appearance of growing at the edges. Humanism, America's disease, also rots at the center. Man is not supreme nor is he *"the measure of all things."*

5. *"The decay of religion - faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people."* It is said that we are living in the "post-Christian Era." That may be, and churches must share the blame. Many of them have been perverted to teaching a social gospel; it's not just electronic evangelists that have made a laughingstock of religion in general; the largest denomination (which claims infallibility for its leader) has been wrong so many times that most refuse to take it seriously. Major denominations have been unable to decide the simplest of moral issues - such as same sex relations. Tradition and entertainment rather than conviction keeps most of them going, but genuine faith is fading and most don't have the knowledge of the word of God nor the will or courage to defend their religious practices.

Can you hear any warnings from the fate of the Mighty Roman Empire? Will we learn from history? Is there an answer to our problems? Yes! The teaching of Christ and his apostles! Come and study with us from His Divine Volume. -**db h**

The color of a man's skin isn't as important as the color of his stories.

