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Stuff that matters to Wayne

Should Unbelievers Join Believers in Worship?

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Frankly, this topic is a tough one which has recently occupied much of my thoughts. The two conflicting issues are as follows:

1. Does the presence of an unbeliever during times of fellowship hinder the power and holiness of God (a kind of quenching)?
2. Do we remain totally open and let any polite person sit in our midst regardless of their spiritual position, so long as they don't 'disturb the flow'.

In one or more of my recent posts I first alluded to my position of being, as of late, quite strong in favour of separation. My position was this:

- God called his people to be separate (you don't have to look far to find this throughout the Bible)
- Most people I have spoken to have noted a 'notable difference' in both the presence of God and the effectiveness of their prayers when praying in the midst of believers (all) and in the midst of unbelievers (even some).
- At the very least an unbeliever, for their own health, should not be participating in communion (1 Cor 11:17-31)

Shortly after growing fairly cemented in my new position, I searched and came across [this interesting discussion](#) on the topic. Somewhere in the middle one person posted 1 Cor 14: 23-25 which says:

If therefore the while church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, his is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

This not only shows that an unbeliever might be in your midst, but also that a great result might come of it, if (in context) the group has some 'holy order' going on. But, I can't help but notice the word 'if'. This word is not 'when'. It is 'if'. When is certain. 'If' is conditional as in the following examples:

I will give you the book when I get there.

This person is expected. The receipt of the book is expected.

I will give you the book if I get there.

This person is not fully expected. To count on receiving this book would not be wise.

So, even this scripture above does not convince me whatsoever that the believers were expecting the visit of an unbeliever. I read and interpret this scripture as follows: If, by chance, while the brothers and sisters of light, who know and love the Lord Jesus are meeting together and doing holy things together (ie. studying the Word, praying, worshipping, etc) and someone happens to pop by who does *not* know the Lord Jesus, and has no fellowship with Him because the blood of the Lamb has not yet cleansed him, if the spiritual gift of prophecy is flowing mightily, this word of prophecy will come forth and convict this unbelieving sinner of his sin and he would fall to his face, repent, and be now able to worship the

true and living God, and enter the fold. I also interpret this to mean that if the spiritual gift of prophecy is not operating (and don't deny that in most places it's either not operating at all or operating in a weird way) that there is no provision to be able to move forward in unity since there is now the presence of one who, without trying to sugar coat things, hates God and His ways. I am therefore still not convinced that the current practice in the Body of Christ of having an 'open to anyone' policy for group meetings is wise. Of course, I'm expecting that any reader at this point has a little voice inside of them saying "Well how then do we win the lost if we can't invite them on Sunday?" That's easy. You have an outreach focused meeting at your church building, if you so love meetings with unbelievers at your church building. However, if I'm not even sure that that is the most effective way to win the lost. [In this article](#) I touch on that a bit. I feel it's more effective meeting the sinner where the sinner is, rather than meeting them at the very last place they would feel comfortable - at a worship service. Saints worship and love God. Sinners worship themselves and hate God (although they deny it in many fancy ways). Simple. In conclusion, I still stand fairly strong in my position that in general, with a few exceptions like the one above, that when we gather together to do God's holy things (worship, prayer, Bible study, etc) that it should be the family of God - the children of light who are present. For what fellowship does light have with darkness? (1 Cor 6:11-18) Please add your thoughts as I seek God's answer on this 'tough topic'

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