

Missing the Sacrifice

No one should ever miss the sacrifice. If we miss the sacrifice, it may be circumstances beyond our control that cause us to miss the sacrifice, or an “ox in the ditch”, or an opportunity to speak with someone that we might not otherwise have, that we are led by the Spirit to do. That is why we have to be led by the Spirit. If we are not led by the Spirit, we are subject to correction. Certainly we must explain what happened. When anyone misses the sacrifice, when he gets back, we have to talk to him and see if it was an ox in the ditch or if it is negligence, which is a sin that has to be confessed. We are learning to judge. By the time the race begins we hope that our sacrifices are not lacking anyone who *could* be here. Everyone has to be present or accounted for. Even when we feel bad and cannot stand up, we have to know, so that it will not just decline over the years. One day the sacrifice will be taken out of the way, but it must not be our fault.

This is not to bring condemnation on those who were not here last night, but to bring it out now so we all can start on this good foundation so that the hundreds of excuses that will come up in the future won't sound good enough.

[One couple who was on family night was invited to a friend's house for an opportunity to tell them about their new life. While they were there, those friends called up others to come and listen. The couple felt it was a bad moment to leave (if they had left for the sacrifice), so they called the house and said they wouldn't make it back for the sacrifice. So they did call and were covered.]

We have to try to regulate our day according to the sacrifice with forethought. If we will not be able to make the sacrifice, then we have to put it off until the next day. Unless you are going to be gone for the night, and then you know it. But we are all answerable. So what you are doing must have been important enough to miss the sacrifice for. And if you would have to make haste to make it in time, then it's not our Father's will — it is better to put it off till tomorrow. Perhaps you did not order your day right. There are reasons that might cause you to miss it, but it would be better to let it go then and wait on what you have to do. If it is essential, then we have to go on and do it, but check with someone else first, so we can all have a good conscience about why you are not there, because we are all answerable. If the standard is not in Hakam or anyone in responsibility, it is not going to be in anyone else.

*Let's just put it this way: If anyone does not come to the sacrifice, we assume they have cut themselves off; we assume they are excommunicated. They are, until we hear what the reason is. It is according to how we relate to the sacrifice, how important we think it is. You could fall back asleep after the music and it could be negligence on your part. Any of us could do this — hear the music and go back to sleep again. It is negligence on our own part if we do it, if we do not go ahead and get up — we did not have a proper fear. “I was thinking that my wife was going to wake me up and she was thinking I was going to wake her up.” You have plenty of excuses, but in Brazil, when people did not come, they were cut off because they *are* cut off. They excommunicated themselves until they came back to the Body and explained why they were missing. Then they are judged as to whether something unavoidable happened or if an opportunity from the Holy Spirit came up to talk to someone. This is so that each one of us will not do what is right in our own eyes.*

If there is no authority, then everyone will do what is right in his own eyes. But we are a body and a body functions in coordination with its head. It is so we can have order. If we do not have order, we cannot do anything; we are out of order. There is nothing more important than the sacrifice. There is nothing that you can do that is more important than the sacrifice, *unless* our Father leads you by His Spirit, and then you have to answer in judgment someday whether it was His Spirit that led you to do it or not. Therefore we must judge ourselves right. If we cannot judge ourselves we will have to be judged someday. But our Father wants us to judge ourselves. He gave us His Spirit so that we can judge ourselves. But if we do not have the Spirit we cannot judge ourselves right — we will be just like a natural man. We are either natural or carnal or spiritual. There are only three categories you can be. *[See “Spiritual, Carnal, and Natural Man”, 7 July 1993].* But this is a spiritual body, each one is regulated by the head.

This instruction is just so that the standard can be passed on in the Body — the standard for the sacrifice. It is the same thing as the priests in old Israel; they would not think about missing the sacrifice. There was no question about it. But still, we cannot overlook an “ox in the ditch”. There is no excuse to miss the sacrifice. What if the old priests missed the sacrifice? They represented all Israel. All Israel would have fallen apart. They had to stand before YHWH for all Israel. Now we are a priesthood and we all stand before Him, morning and evening. Nothing you can do can be more important than the sacrifice. That is the standard that is going into our hearts through these object lessons so that we can go on as a dedicated nation. There will be a hundred excuses that come up. Someone might think its ok for them to stay in bed, but maybe they could have come if they wanted to

Of course, that does not mean you have to come if you are sick. If you are sick, call for the elders. At least let them know and let them judge the extent of your illness. (And then if the elder prays and the person and the elder has faith, he can be healed. It is just according to whether you have faith or not and can hear from our Father. If a person calls for the elder on his own initiative, by the Holy Spirit, because he has faith, then there is no question about it, he can be healed. But the elders just have to know that the person has not sinned, and if he has sinned, he can confess it.)

About Wearing Shorts

Another thing: In Brazil it is very hot. But the men go to the Breaking of Bread in long pants. For the sacrifice we wear shorts. It is fine for the men to wear shorts, and the women, of course, wear proper attire. I have been hearing that some people think you cannot come to the sacrifice with shorts on. But it is fine to come to the sacrifice with shorts on. You can come with proper attire — shorts the proper length, covering your nakedness, covering your thighs down to the knee. (The women's, especially, should be down below their knees.) But for the Breaking of Bread, we wear long pants because when you sit on the floor, you can see up the shorts.