

CELEBRATION

The Old Testament has many accounts of great celebrations – Feasts and Festivals, Temple Dedication
Jesus entered the world heralded with great joy – Luke 2:10

Jesus initiated his ministry with the Proclamation of the Celebration of the Year of Jubilee – Luke 4:18-19; from Is.

EXPLAIN JUBILEE – then... “Such a radical, divinely enabled freedom from possessions and a restructuring of social arrangements cannot help but bring celebration. When the poor receive the good news, when the captives are released, when the blind receive their sight, when the oppressed are liberated, who can withhold the shout of jubilee?”

All of the social stipulations of the year of Jubilee – canceling all debts, releasing slaves, planting no crops, returning property to the original owner – were a celebration of the gracious provision of God. Jesus left the world requesting for His disciples great joy – John 15:11

Celebration is tied into BLESSING. When God blesses, how can we NOT celebrate? God turns our mourning into dancing as freedom from anxiety and care form the basis of celebration.

“The carefree spirit of joyous festivity is absent in contemporary society” – Richard Foster

SOME PRINCIPLES OF CELEBRATION

1. Celebration is an ALWAYS attitude – Phil. 4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS! We do ourselves and others well when we find something to celebrate - always! That is why celebration is an effective cure for sadness of heart.
2. Celebration is a carefree attitude – be anxious for NOTHING – Phil. 4:6; Matt. 6:25
3. Celebration gives Strength to Life – and the JOY of the LORD is our strength (Neh. 8:10). We cannot continue long in life without strength! The joy and celebration of the Lord allows us to persevere!
4. Celebration is the result of Obedience - the one true producer of genuine Joy. Luke 11:27-28
5. Celebration has the ability to give us perspective. It saves us from taking ourselves too seriously.

As with all the Disciplines, there is INDIVIDUAL CELEBRATION and CORPORATE CELEBRATION. The principles above relate mostly to Individual Celebration. What about CORPORATE CELEBRATION?

Some thoughts on Old Testament Feasts & Festivals... As New Testament, non-Jewish – predominantly Gentile believers, there is a warning given to us to be wary of the controversies concerning “food, drink, festivals, new moons, sabbaths” - See Colossians 2:14-17

So What Celebrations should we keep as Christians?

Spiritual Celebrations: OT Feasts? OT Festivals? Christmas? Easter? Thanksgiving?

NOTE: Even though the world has twisted and corrupted some holidays, we don't have to. For example, make sure Christmas is about Jesus and the giving of gifts – and not Santa; Make sure Easter is about the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and new life – not the Easter bunny.

Secular Holidays & Events: New Years? Presidents Day? Super Bowl??

Family – Rites of Passage – becoming a teenager, an adult, a high school graduate, college graduate, marriage

Annual – Birthdays, Anniversaries

General Celebrations – folk dancing, singing together, outings together, holidays & special events

“Custom” Festivals & Celebrations – establish your own! Years ago – I was privileged to help lead a “March for Jesus”

Rather than making a LIST of Celebrations that we require ourselves and other believers to keep, we might do better to grant as much as freedom as possible to others as long as Scripture is not clearly violated – and I do say clearly.

HOW TO CELEBRATE?? Besides what has already been mentioned, here are some specific thoughts:

Physically - Sing, dance, shout, laugh, have a drink (unless you're a Baptist!)

Creatively - Proper fantasy and imagination; enjoy the fine arts – sculptures, dance-ballet, painting, plays, music

Become like Little Children - How do children celebrate? NOISE – lots of it!! Dance! Joy! Simplicity! Imagination!

Commemorate the Event – plaques, gifts, trees, awards, jewelry, letters, etc