

Worship at home began with the early church

Is it Biblical to worship at home?

Actually, for hundreds of years Christians worshipped by gathering with their households. Those who attended worship in homes included the Apostles and Saint Paul.

“Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.” — Romans 16:5

“The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.” — 1 Corinthians 16:19

“Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house:” — Colossians 4:15

“... and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:” — Philemon 1:2

Why did the early Christians worship at home?

They were aware of the risk of worshipping in large groups because Christians were suspected of being treasonous by the Romans. So, when gathering in large groups was not safe, they worshipped in their homes. For example, in correspondence from Pliny, the Roman Governor to Trajan, the Roman Emperor stated:

“I asked them whether they were Christians, and if they confessed, I asked them a second and third time with threats of punishment. If they kept to it, I ordered them for execution.”

Without church buildings, did the church lose members?

No, in fact, this was a time of intense growth. Not because Christians advertised, but because they talked to their friends and neighbors about their faith.

“And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” — Acts 2:47

“Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women,” — Acts 5:14

Worshipping at home, were people less generous?

No, this was a time of Biblical stewardship when even those with very little gave to the fund to bring disaster relief to the people starving in Jerusalem.

“For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in

Jerusalem.” — Romans 15:26

The early church worshipped at home because it was not safe to gather, but they still shared the Good News and were generous.

So it is now that many Christians do not feel safe to gather, but even at home they use social media to share their own faith and what their congregation is doing. People today are still so moved by God’s grace in Christ Jesus, they remain very generous during this pandemic.

For that, we all say thank you.

— Pastor Mark A. Anderson
Assistant to the Bishop



DERECHO DISASTER RESPONSE

Congregations and individuals can support families affected by the Aug. 10 derecho storm by giving to the Iowa Lutheran Disaster Response Fund. The fund is a partnership among Lutheran Services in Iowa and the three Iowa synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Iowa LDR Fund has already given \$10,000 to the Southeastern Iowa Synod, which is distributing the funds to be primarily used to feed people who have nutritional needs as a result of the derecho.

The LSI Disaster Relief web page shares how congregations and individuals can donate or volunteer to help Iowans recover from the destruction left behind by this severe storm. The web page also offers a link to resources for those who need food assistance, relief grant funding, behavioral health care or other support following the derecho.

To learn more or to donate online, visit <https://lsiowa.org/disasterrelief>.

To mail a donation, designate “2020 Iowa Storm Fund” in the memo line of the check, and mail to: Lutheran Services in Iowa, Attn: 2020 Iowa Storm Fund — Lutheran Disaster Relief, 106 16th St. SW, Waverly, IA 50677.