

Is It Acceptable to Attend a Gay Pride Event?

Pop star Taylor Swift, with 102 million Instagram “Swiftie” followers, uses her influence in her latest music video to mock Christians and make a case for the LGBTQ lifestyles. Showing gay guys kissing and lesbians like Ellen DeGeneres and transgenders frolicking, she concludes by asking everyone to support the Equality Act, called “the most serious threat to life and liberty to ever be proposed by Congress” by Mat Staver, president of Liberty Counsel.

Donating megabucks, exploiting social media and utilizing her musical talents, the once-innocent superstar is intentional in advocating for homosexuality. Should we Christians stay silent or seize opportunities to connect with individuals drawn to this lifestyle?

A week ago, I served with a team reaching out to over 100,000 people at the Bonnaroo music festival. Final figures aren’t in, but last year, over 750 conversions took place, and thousands more had the seed of the gospel planted in their hearts. All this took place in an atmosphere peppered with immodest dress, drugs and profanity.

In our local church, there was a young woman who regularly went with a team to a strip club where they extended the love of God to broken women engaged in a tragic lifestyle. Testimonies of ladies responding to the transformative message of the gospel brought tears to my eyes.

While I never celebrate “gay pride” during the month of June, I’ve attended 17 gay pride events in Washington, DC, Atlanta and Nashville. Knowing we must be cautious and use wisdom in participating in these types of events, I go to connect with people and share the gospel as the Holy Spirit leads me. I

engage with people and reach out to them in love, usually concluding my interaction by giving them my personal testimony tract.

Therefore, I don't agree with those who believe attending a gay pride event is prohibited for all Christians. I do believe it's wise for a new believer, someone who's recently left the LGBTQ lifestyle and young people whose parents cannot in faith commend their participation to "hold for the time being" and stay back as part of an intercessory prayer support team.

Capitalizing Upon Crowds

A poet famously said, "The mass of humanity live lives of quiet desperation." Jesus certainly understood this as He ministered to groups and individuals in His day.

Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted and were scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:35-39).

In the '70s, during the Jesus Movement, a small nucleus of us in Washington, D.C., were stirred to reach confused and impressionable young people in our generation. Starting with a handful of people in a home, we prayed, proclaimed the gospel and ministered biblical truth wherever and whenever there were lost people. The above passage was an anchor for us as we went forth, and in a few short years this handful grew to over 2000 meeting weekly about 15 minutes from the White House!

Sensitivity to the Spirit

Currently in theaters across America, a film is playing that is gaining lots of attention. I saw this documentary, entitled *5B*, and like multitudes, was deeply moved by the charity and sensitivity of people ministering to homosexuals in San Francisco.

The movie highlights a ward on the fifth floor of San Francisco General Hospital that focused on compassionate treatment of homosexuals who contracted the AIDS/HIV virus. From their lifestyle choice they faced the anguish of a torturous death and needed care and a human touch. There was never any mention if these caregivers were Christians, but they sure remind moviegoers of Mother Theresa and her Sisters caring for lepers in India. This tiny Nobel Peace Prize ambassador for Jesus told us, "I'm a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world."

Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He stated this was the priority. He was intentional. Yes, he prayed and prepared sermons and spent time in fellowship, but he regularly and consistently shared the gospel. Are we?

Three Groups of Gays

Strolling the grounds and mingling with the crowds at a gay pride event, I guard my eyes from anything unclean and take advantage of "divine appointments." I follow my spiritual radar and as Jesus noticed Nathaniel "under the fig tree" (John 1:48b), I look for individuals who might be by themselves or appear lonely, ready to be reached.

Some gays take on the identity of a militant. They are rough and ready to be combative with anyone perceived as opposing their radical agenda. I usually avoid these individuals who would see me as a threat.

Other gays perceive themselves as moderate. Having found acceptance in the lifestyle they've discovered or with which

they are experimenting, they're on a journey trying to find a place to belong.

A third group of gays aren't happy and are trying to move on. If they sense we are trustworthy and nonjudgmental, they'll admit the emptiness of a lifestyle they thought would bring fulfillment. They want to abandon it and are looking for a way out. They desperately crave caring relationship and community to heal their rejection. They're ripe for the kingdom of God!

My window of opportunity came with John who went from the second group to the third, but unfortunately, it was too late. True compassion from me meant regular visits to a hospital for John, who went from gay to straight as he battled the ravages of AIDS. Just being there, listening, encouraging and reassuring him along with his precious young daughter meant the world to him. Later, I was able to take care of his memorial service in a way that I trust inspired all of his former gay friends who attended to reflect on his life and how it was transformed through forgiveness and a genuine relationship with Jesus.

5 Reasons to Attend Pride Events

Communicating the gospel is a directive, not an elective, although it's not necessarily God's will for everyone to go to gay pride marches and events. There are levels of maturity in the Christian experience, and we must take into consideration the possibility of nudity, drugs and offensive behavior.

This having been said, there are five ways to be involved at these types of events.

P – Praying at the event or behind the scenes for participants who are lost, deceived and