

Pastor Drinks Beer in the Name of Jesus at Bar-Based Bible Study

In between a sip or two of beer, a group of men delved deeper into the **Bible** at a bar off Route 67 in Oxford, Conn. last week, the Associated Press reports. The story goes on to paint a picture of men digging deeper for a better understanding of themselves and a better relationship with God.

Is that **biblical**? The Rev. John Donnelly of Christ Church Quaker Farms thinks so. The way he sees it, a lot of men won't go to **Bible** study in church—but they might be willing to listen to Jesus with a cold brewsky in hand.

That's why he launched a group called Beer, Bible and Brotherhood. The first meeting drew 10 men who downed beer while contemplating Bible verses, the AP reports. He's hoping to build the group of suds-sipping seekers to 50.

"Downstairs in a banquet room Wednesday evening, the men gathered at long tables, with pints in front of a few of them. Donnelly had Samuel Adams Boston Lager, while some sipped Samuel Adams OctoberFest," the AP says.

Donnelly's club may be a sign of the times. There's a definite cultural shift in the body of Christ to open the bottles, er, the gates to alcoholic beverages. Moody Bible Institute in September lifted its alcohol and tobacco ban.

"Generally, permissive attitudes about alcohol within an evangelical denomination or school are looked upon by many conservative evangelicals as a hallmark of decline, perhaps even of apostasy," Larry Eskridge, associate director of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, told RNS.

“By contrast, more ‘progressive’ elements within the evangelical community these days are likely to look upon those institutions with strictures against alcohol use as legalistic and accuse them of ‘majoring on the minor.’”

So which is it? Are churches that frown on Christians drinking alcohol legalistic and majoring in the minor or is the acceptance of alcohol and tobacco a gateway to **apostasy** that will usher in sexual immorality and all manner of sin? Would you want to attend a church where the pastor downs a few brews with the boys in a bar over Bible study? Or does that send the wrong message?

Let your voice be heard in the comment box below.

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