

Solemn Assembly

(Joel 1:14) Sanctify ye a fast, call a **solemn assembly**, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

(Joel 2:15-18) Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a **solemn assembly**: (16) Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. (17) Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? (18) Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

solemn: Associated or connected with religious rites or observances; performed with due ceremony and reverence; having a religious character; sacred.

reverence: Deep or due respect felt or shown towards a person on account of his or her relationship; deference. b. Deep respect and veneration for some thing, place or person regarded as having a sacred or exalted character.

Opening Hymn: # 235, *Lord, How Delightful*

Opening Prayer by Pastor Boffey

1. God's house should be a house of prayer. **MAR 11:17; ACT 2:42; 13:3.**
 - A. The church is particularly blessed when its members unite in public, corporate prayer. **ACT 4:31; 12:5.**
 - B. God looks with special favor on prayers offered up in His house. **1KI 9:3; 2CH 7:15; MAT 21:13.**
2. The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous avails much. **JAM 5:16-18.**
3. Believers do well to fast from time to time. **MAT 9:14-15 c/w ACT 13:2; 14:23; 1CO 7:4-6.**
 - A. fast: To abstain from food, or to restrict oneself to a meagre diet, either as a religious observance or as a ceremonial expression of grief. *gen.* To go without food. Also (contextually) to go without drink.
 - B. The sinless Son of God fasted. **MAT 4:2.**
 - C. Paul, our apostle and example, fasted oft. **2CO 11:27.**
 - D. Fasting is a chastening of the soul for humility's sake. **PSA 35:13; 69:10.**
 - E. Fasting is not for show. **MAT 6:16-18.**
 - F. Fasting and prayer can do what a miracle cannot do. **MAT 17:19-21.**
 - G. Fasting and prayer overrules conjugal intimacy. **1CO 7:5.**
5. Prayers should be offered in faith: according to God's will as revealed in His word (**ROM 10:17**) and so with full trust that He will honor His commitment to hear such prayers and answer them. **MAR 11:24; 1JO 5:14-15.**
 - A. We can only come boldly unto God's throne if we do so in full confidence and faith. **HEB 4:16 c/w HEB 11:6.**
 - B. Waverers need not expect their prayers to be answered. **JAM 1:5-7; 1TI 2:8.**
6. (**PSA 37:4**) Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
7. Prayer demands actions in harmony with its desires. **LUK 11:9-10.**
8. Prayer should always be subject to God's will. **MAT 6:10; 26:39.**

Today's solemn assembly is primarily for prayer for the fate and possible adoption of Hawa and Isha.

1. God has a special eye to the little ones (especially believers). **MAT 18:1-6; JAM 1:27.**
2. **(PSA 127:3)** Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
3. Parents have a solemn responsibility to cherish (hold dear, treat with tenderness and affection) their children (**1TH 2:7**) while exhorting, comforting and charging them. **1TH 2:11.**
4. *A natural affection* should bind parent to child. **ISA 49:15 c/w LAM 4:3.**
5. Cruel and abusive parents effectively forfeit their parental rights and the children may have to be *adopted* by someone else.
 - A. Satan was a cruel parent who exploited us, abused us and ultimately has no use for us outside of his own wretched self-interests.
 - B. God rescued us from Satan and in love adopted us as His own. **EPH 1:5; GAL 4:4-6.**
6. If Hawa's and Isha's birth parents will not perform their God-ordained role of nurturing and cherishing their children, and especially if they represent a threat to their children, may the God of adoption look with favor upon Brother Shane and Sister Sheila and allow them to adopt these children.

Prayers are to be now offered by men of the church.

Hymn # 58, *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

Closing thoughts and prayer offered by Pastor Boffey