

Gathered Worship

The Purpose & Shape of Christian Worship

Introduction

In the regular rhythms of church life, it is easy for gathered worship to become familiar and eventually unexamined. We may assume that our way of worship is simply “the way church is done.” Yet the diversity of churches and Christian traditions reminds us that this is not exactly the case. Why then do we do what we do when we gather? What governs the shape and order of our worship? Are these practices grounded in Scripture, or are they merely our traditions and ways of doing things?

Main Point: As believers, we are to _____ regularly to _____ God in accordance with His _____!

What is Worship?

- The New Testament uses several different terms that help us to understand worship.

1. **προσκυνέω (proskyneō)**—lit. to prostrate or to bow oneself before someone or something. As it is most often used, it means to express in attitude or gesture one’s complete dependence _____ or reverence _____ a high authority figure, (to fall down and) worship.

John 4:23—*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship (proskyneō) the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

“The physical act of bowing down should reflect the inner attitude of the heart—submission to God.”

—Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

2. **λατρεύω (latreuō)**—lit. to serve. The term is used of _____ or _____ acts of devotion or service.

Rom. 12:1—*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (latreia)*

“Rather than brining a dead animal in worship, the NT believer offers God a living body, set apart to God in an act of worship.” —Paul Enns

3. **σέβω (sebō)**—to express in gestures, rites, or ceremonies one’s allegiance or _____ to deity; to worship. Used of devout persons and God-fearers.

Acts 16:14—*One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper (sebō) of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.*

Key Point: To worship God is to ascribe _____ to Him through our reverence and service in light of His self-revelation in His Word.

“True worship must be of a spiritual nature or realm, and it must be in accordance with the truth as God has revealed (John 4:24). It involves the decisive presentation of the believer’s entire being to God (Rom. 12:1-2).”

—Paul Enns

- Worship is both personal and communal.

1. _____, All-of-Life Worship

Rom. 5:1-2—¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Col. 3:17, 23-24—¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him...²³Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

2. Gathered, _____ Worship

Matt. 18:20—“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Heb. 10:24-25—²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Key Point: While there is great _____ in how we worship God as individuals, Scripture emphasizes particular _____ for the purpose of gathered worship.

The Practices of Gathered Worship

- Gathered worship is to be shaped by and filled with the Word of God.

2 Tim. 3:16-17—¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

1. The Word of God is _____.

1 Tim. 4:13a—Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture...

Col. 4:16a—When this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans...

2. The Word of God is _____.

1 Tim. 2:1—First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people

Col. 4:2—Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

3. The Word of God is _____.

Eph. 5:19—addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart

Col. 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

4. The Word of God is _____.

1 Tim. 4:13—Until I come, devote yourself...to exhortation, to teaching.

2 Tim. 4:1-2—¹I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching

5. The Word of God is _____ in the Ordinances.

Baptism

Matt. 28:18—Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

The Lord's Supper

1 Cor. 11:23-25—²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Key Point: The Word of God sets the _____ of our worship practices and the Holy Spirit guides us in accordance with it as we come together regularly as a local church.

"We gather as the body of Christ, His bride, and our continuing worship turns to a gathered feast...We gather as one body— young and old, feeble and strong, rich and poor—undivided by the little things of life like style and music. We gather around the unifying power of the Word and bring our praise to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

—Harold M. Best, *Unceasing Worship*

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1. The Word of God is Read.

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Col. 4:16a—When this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans...

2. The Word of God is Prayed.

1 Tim. 2:1—First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people

Col. 4:2—Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

3. The Word of God is Sung.

Eph. 5:19—addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart

Col. 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

4. The Word of God is Proclaimed.

1 Tim. 4:13—Until I come, devote yourself...to exhortation, to teaching.

2 Tim. 4:1-2—¹I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching

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