

## HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR WORSHIP?

Worship is a time to meet God. It is a time to come into an intimate relationship with the Father. It can be one of the most rewarding, demanding and difficult understandings of life. I want to spend time today looking at some things that hopefully will help us improve our worship to God both as individuals and collectively. Many people today are saying that worship has become stale and uninviting. They dread those hours each week: the song service is dead, the prayers are rituals, and the preaching has no life in it. Worship should be a time that we look forward to each week, but for many, this is simply not the case.

- I. Remember whom we worship.
  - A. There are times when worship services tend to focus on the critical problems within a congregation.
  - B. Worship should be a time to focus on God and his Son.
    1. Worship is “paying divine homage to God.”
    2. We must give him the praise and glory due His name. (Psa. 95:6).
    3. Psa. 96:9
  - C. The direction of worship is important
    1. Misdirected “worship” prompts people to think of what they can get instead of what may be given.
    2. We need to re-orient ourselves to worship.
    3. It seems we have forgotten our purpose for coming together.
    4. We need to draw near to God with a true heart, with full faith, and with a clean conscience (Heb. 10:22).
    5. It would help if we would focus on why we are here.
  - D. Regardless of what man may think, say and do in regards to worship, he can never improve upon God’s way.
    1. Current movement underway to “improve” upon God’s plan.
    2. We are being told that if we don’t change our worship practices to keep up with the pace and demands of modern society and culture we will die.
    3. If we change and get away from the Bible’s pattern for worship, we are dead already!
  - E. John 4:23,24
    1. Worship has always been a serious matter with God.
    2. Concerning worship, God’s mind has never changed—always given man His directives and guidelines.
  - F. Those who fail in worshiping in accordance with His dictates do what they do “in vain” (Matt.15:9)
    1. Some worship in ignorance (Acts 17:22,23; Prov. 14:12).
    2. Some practice “will worship” (Col. 2:8, 23).
    3. Paul comes to the 21<sup>st</sup>. century with his 1<sup>st</sup>. century words.
    4. Tradition, philosophy, the “feel good” tendency become the ultimate standard for modern worship.
    5. Successful worship is based on how it makes men feel and not how it glorifies God.
    6. If it “stirs the heart and moves the feet,” it is successful and good—no matter that it violates God’s divines arrangement every much as did Cain (Gen. 4) and Nadab & Abihu (Lev. 10).
- II. Other Items that will help us.
  - A. Preparation.
    1. How much time do we spend preparing for worship?
    2. Under the old law people consecrated themselves for service (II Chron.29:31; Exod. 19:9-11)
    3. They made preparations for the feasts, i.e. they got ready.
    4. Leaders in the worship need to prepare. (Sermon, songs, communion, prayer)
    5. So does everyone else.
    6. The best investment for a good service on Lord’s Day morning is on Saturday night.

- a. If we wait until early Sunday morning to start getting ready we have waited too late to really have our minds and bodies ready for the good the service can offer us.
  - b. A late Saturday night movie, up early next morning trying to bathe the children, dressing, shaving, washing hair, trying to pick out what the family is going to wear, settling family arguments, catching the news headlines, etc..
  - c. With all this going on, do we really think our hearts and minds will be ready for worship we get to the meeting house?
  - d. We would benefit more from worship if we made these preparations on Saturday evening instead of Sunday morning.
7. We often spend more time preparing for a trip or going hunting or fishing than we do to worship God.
  8. Nothing will take the place of adequate preparation for a wonderful and acceptable period of worship to the Lord.
- B. Faithful Attendance.
1. We suppose that everyone will be here, but it doesn't happen that way.
  2. We ignore Hebrews 10:25
  3. This is a nightmare for the elders and preachers . . . trying to get the members to faithfully attend the services.
  4. It seems that everything else comes first in some peoples lives, when in fact the Lord's work must be first or not at all (Matt.6:33).
  5. Promptness is important as well.
  6. We need to think about the influence we are having on our family and others around us.
  7. When God's people gather to worship every one needs to be there every time!
- C. Reverence
1. Do we show reverence for God when we assemble to worship?
    - a. By our attitudes...
    - b. By our dress...
    - c. By our conversation.
  2. II Kings 17:36-"But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice."
  3. Psa.119:161 "my heart standeth in awe of thy word."
  4. I have read of examples of people discussing what they did the day before just as the communion was being passed to them.
  5. One person read a novel during the worship.
  6. Let me mention something, not to hurt feelings, but to cause us to think about what is going on.
    - a. When we allow our children to go in and out to water fountain, bathroom, etc... are we not distracting from our worship and those around us. (Emergencies are exceptions).
    - b. Need to teach our children (and us) that such needs to be taken care of before we sit down.
  7. Being reverent doesn't mean that we have to get down on our knees every time we pray, but it seems that we have forgotten the power and influence such can have on our lives. (Psa. 95:6)
- D. Gratitude
1. Psa. 116:12
  2. Psa. 122:1
  3. Psa. 42:1,2
- E. Humility
1. II Chron. 7:14
  2. I Peter 5:6
  3. "When you come to Jesus he will never send you away empty, unless you are so full of self there is no room left for anything else."
  4. We need to remember that we are coming into the presence of **God!**

## F. Simplicity

1. One of the outstanding traits of N.T. worship is its simplicity.
2. Worship is never improved by a lot of “hoopla” and “pageantry.”
3. N.T. worship is beautiful and meaningful because it is simple and plain, when carried out with Christian dignity.
4. Think about the various acts...
  - a. Lord’s Supper –fruit of the vine and unleavened bread...
  - b. Singing–no mechanical instruments of music, no robes or choirs, etc...
  - c. Preaching–preach from God’s word, no special garments for preacher to wear, etc...
  - d. Giving–each give as you have prospered and have purposed in your heart.
  - e. Prayer–from the heart...
5. We can always improve our carrying out of the Lord’s commands involving Lord’s day worship, but no improvement can be made on the acts of worship.

## G. Participation.

1. To some, worship is a duty/ritual, time (usually one hour on Sunday morning) when God is paid back what He is owed.
2. To some, worship is a form of entertainment, where they come to appraise performances and be a spectator.
3. To some worship, is an opportunity to be with the right people; express social skills, meet friends.
4. To some worship, is like an exhibit, where they evaluate everything on the basis of its artistic value: beauty of service; atmosphere, what others wore, how quiet the children were/were not, how “uplifting” the sermon was, etc...
5. To the sincere worshiper, none of these are adequate.
6. He/she comes to participate in worship to God.

Con: It is the Christian’s business in this life to improve in every facet of our service to God. We can begin with our attitude toward worship. When we improve our worship, our homage to God, we improve our lives. Take some time to evaluate your worship to God. Does it need improving?