

# Worship Together



A Steward In Worship  
Text: Selected Scriptures  
Series: The Christian As A Steward, #6  
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## Introduction.

Worship has been a leading focus of the church in recent years. New books and seminars have appeared and multiplied. Many different approaches and styles have been tried with changes to music, the balance of the parts of worship services, length of services.

A clear focus and practice of worship is always a critical need. Our highest calling is not to be a missionary, pastor, Christian leader, evangelist or even faithful in prayer, but to be a true worshiper of God. Back in 1961, A.W. Tozer preached a sermon titled, *“Worship: The Missing Jewel Of The Evangelical Church.”* Yes, then and now we need a clear focus and practice of worship.

Sometimes changes can be good while, at other times not so good. New approaches in worship can help us break free from empty routines or, at other times, simply substitute one routine for another. Carefully planned moods for services can enhance worship or encourage the *spectator mentality*, the “What can I get out of it” kind of thinking. Changes in style can bring a fresh breeze to worship, but also have led to an emphasis on style over substance.

Sometimes our practice and traditions are held tightly, but not understood. A church had a new pastor. After the first Communion service there were some rumblings that he had not done it “the right way.” The Pastor heard about the complaints, asked one of the leaders for help. It was the tradition in that church for the pastor to serve the cup to each person individually. The new pastor had done that, but not in “the right way.” “Our previous pastor of many years,” he was told, “always touched the radiator before serving the cup.” The new pastor was puzzled. He called the former pastor. “Yes,” he said, “I did it originally to get rid of static electricity. People were complaining of sparks on their lips. I guess it became a tradition — sparks or no sparks.”

Let's look at three questions as we highlight the basic truths about being *a steward in worship*.

## What Is Worship?

The first question is "What is worship." It may be helpful to zero in on what it is not. On Sunday mornings we come here for our *Worship Service*. The title, time, day, place do not guarantee that worship will take place. Worship is not simply being in a meeting or service where we are supposed to worship, or where others may be worshipping God.

Nor is worship something that happens to us. It is not just being touched emotionally, being challenged, convicted or encouraged. While these experiences can lead us to worship and result from worship, they can occur apart from worship. Worship is never guaranteed or automatic in any setting or activity, and yet it can be experience in a vast array of settings or activities.

Turning to the positive let's zero in a bit on what worship is. Worship is an objective reality. This means that it is not something we are free to define according to our own desires and preferences, although we can express it in very personal ways. One of our problems in getting a handle on worship is the current widespread view of personal and subjective truth. The "What I think and feel" standard of truth. One writer puts it this way, "We have become dogmatic about the value of wings and dreams, but embarrassingly soft on roots and truth. Substance — time-honored biblical content — is increasingly conspicuous by its absence."

Listen to some objectively sound descriptions of worship given to us by four writers.

- "Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth. Worship is not passive, but is participative. Worship is not simply a mood, it is a response. Worship is not just a feeling; it is a declaration."
- "Worship is individual, corporate, public and private service for the Lord which is generated by a reverence for and submission to Him Who is totally worthy."

- Worship is “the art of personal adoration, meditation, and respect directed toward God and His Word. Worship involves such things as praying, giving, singing, reading and mediating when these are directed toward the Lord.”
- “Worship is the believer’s response of all that he is — mind, emotion, will and body — to all that God is and says and does.”

In summary, worship is in the *active voice* — it is how we respond, what we do in light of who God is and what He does. While our true worship will affect us, it is what we *do*, give to God, not what we receive or feel. It is our active response of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and service to all that God is and does. And, yes, it is our highest calling to be true worshipers of God.

## **Why Should We Worship God?**

The second question is “Why should we worship God?” As Christians we may just assume that we should. One reason God gives us in His word is because He is worthy of our worship. God, and only God, is worthy of the supreme devotion, adoration, praise, thanksgiving and service from the depths of our hearts and minds. Listen to King David’s call to worship God because He is worthy in Psalm 29.

“Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the might, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; worship the LORD in holy array. The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD is over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful, the voice of the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a wild ox. The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer to calve and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everything says, ‘Glory!’ The LORD sat as King at the flood; yes the LORD sits as King forever. The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace” (1-11).

That is just one of many similar statements in the Bible. Recall our Scripture reading earlier today in Psalm 95. Take the time later to read to the following Psalm, Psalm 96. In the New Testament, in The Revelation chapter 5, with the Apostle's John's vision of heaven, the angels and great masses of people together raising their voices, verse 12 records the chorus, "*Worthy* is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." Yes, God, and God alone *is* worthy of all our worship.

We also should worship God because He wants us to worship Him. Jesus has told us in John 4:23-24,

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father *seeks* to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

God *seeks* us to truly worship Him. It is a simple word, but the force of the word is not easy to translate. In one sense it means to search for, to investigate, to desire, be intent on something. Beneath it is the picture of an ongoing, burning desire. It tells us that a deep and constant passion of God is that you and I truly worship Him.

One more reason, because God commands us to worship Him. Psalm 2 verse 11 directs us, “Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling.” And Psalm 95 verse 6 also, “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

Why Should We Worship God? Because God is worthy of our worship, because God wants us to worship Him, because God commands us to worship Him.

## **How Should We Worship God?**

The third questions follows, “If all we have seen is true, how then should we worship God?” Let me give us some guiding principles on the *how* of worship. First, we are to worship as stewards of God together. Turn to Hebrews 10, picking it up at verse 22.

“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies

washed with pure water. let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (22-25).

Note the emphasis on worshipping *together*:

- “Let *us* draw near.”
- “Let *us* hold fast the confession of our hope.”
- “Let *us* consider how to stimulate *one another* to love and good deeds, not forsaking *our own* assembling together.”
- “encouraging *one another*.”

Yes, we are to worship god individually and privately, but also *together* as His stewards.

A second principle is to worship with joy. We go back to Psalm 95, looking at the first two verses, “O come let us sing for *joy* to the LORD, let us shout *joyfully* to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout *joyfully* to Him with psalms.”

There are times when our circumstances are not joyful. We quickly think of the families that had children killed and injured at the schools in Colorado and then here in Tabor. In those times we are not to pretend, to put on a mask. In those days we come to God as the Psalmist did in Psalm 130, “Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to my supplications” (1-2). And, if we are grounded in the truth of God even in times of despair, as that Psalmist, we will “wait for the Lord” to bring renewal (5-6), our hope will be firmly fixed on Him (5, 7), knowing with certainty that God will shower us with His lovingkindness (7).

In day to day living, focussing on God, Who He is, what He is like, what He has done, is doing and will do, will bring *joy* which should be a mainstay of our worship.

Another principle to guide us in the *how* of worship is to worship with reverence. Still in Psalm 95, starting at verse 6, “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”

*Reverence.* A Sunday school teacher asked her students what they thought the phrase “the fear of the Lord” means. One boy, “I think it means being sort of scared ... God is way up there ... watching.” The a girl said, “The fear of the Lord means reverence. Thinking about how great God is makes me want to be still. I think that’s why I talk softly when I pray out-loud.”

Reverence does not mean to be afraid of God, but seeing something of God’s greatness, to be in humble awe of Him as the Eternal, Sovereign and Loving God. As the writer of Hebrews tells us, we can and should come into God’s presence with confidence, boldness, but always with *reverence*.

One more principle to guide us, we are to worship with faith. Continuing in Psalm 95, in verses 7b-11 God says,

“Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work. For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways. Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest.”

“With *faith*?” This is a warning — a warning not to harden our hearts, to test God as Israel did in the wilderness. What we should do, the opposite of what that generation did, is to have *faith* — faith in knowing, believing and *obeying* God, His character, His Word.

## **Conclusion.**

As Christians we are stewards of God, and that includes being a steward in worship. What is the state of your stewardship of worship?

There is an old saying that people fall into three categories: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, those who wonder what happened. Getting anything *out of* worship is directly dependant on our putting effort *into* it.

So, in church worship it begins before you get here on Sunday morning, before you leave home by preparing yourself to worship God together with the church family. It continues with entering into the music, Scripture, offering, message and actively responding to God. It requires dedicated focus, not allowing our thoughts to wander or distractions to get us off track.

In personal worship the same principles apply: preparation, entering into worship fully, focused. In special times by yourself with scripture, prayer, mediation, singing as well as the few moments here and there throughout the day.

As we close with a few moments of personal time with God, honestly evaluate the quality of your worship with God. Thank God for the privilege of worship. Commit yourself to be a faithful steward in worship.

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