

WHEN WE GATHER

WEEK 2: WORSHIP IN MUSIC

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Acts 2:44 ~ “And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common.”

Acts 20:7 ~ “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together...”

- Christians since the birth of the church have gathered together for a purpose that they might praise God and grow together in truth; then they depart to spread the gospel of our Savior.
- Many churches will gather together today, and it might look quite different from one church to another. But all that we do has a purpose.
- Over the course of this mini class, we will look more closely at why we do what we do when we gather. Why do we do it when we do it? Why don't we do more? Why do some churches do less?
- We will look at what might be too much, what might be wrong, and why.
- The nature of the class will provide a Biblical foundation that shapes how and why we gather.
- Fall Schedule:
 - September 7: Why Call to Worship?
 - **October 5: Worship through Music**
 - November 2: Worship in Giving
 - December 7: Scripture Reading
 - January-June: Prayer, Word, Ordinances, One Anothers, Witness, Homes, Missions Moments

WHY DO WE GATHER?

Hebrews 10:24-25 ~ “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ 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.”

- Ultimately, we worship the Lord in whatever we do (Romans 12:1-2) and worship him individually as well as corporately (John 4:23-24; 1 Cor 10:31).

Working Purpose Statement of our Worship Services: When we weekly gather together according to the Word of God, we aim to vertically worship and grow in spiritual wisdom and knowledge of God and horizontally encourage, equip and edify one another, by the power of the Spirit who sanctifies, to the praise of the glory of the risen Christ, and for the bold gospel witness as we scatter, until the Lord returns.

WORSHIP 101

- What is worship? Is it when the band starts, or is it more than that?
- Do we form what is “true worship from our own ideas, experiences, or other churches’ “success”?
- “To worship the Lord is to ascribe to him the honor, glory, adoration, praise, reverence, and devotion that is due him, both for his greatness and for his goodness.”¹
- “True worship must **begin in the heart and mind** of the worshiper. Hence, it cannot be equated with elaborate services, ornate buildings, eloquent prayers, or beautiful music. Those things may be outward expressions of genuine worship, but God accepts only that which flows from sincere devotion to him.”²
- Revelation 4 gives us a glimpse into what the people who stand before the Lord day and night think about God:

Rev 4:8-10 ~

And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.” And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

- Ps 29:2 ~ **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array.**
- 1 Cor 10:31 ~ **Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.** ³
- Worship is **Singular, Correct, Reverent, and Regular!** (Exodus 20:2-6)
- But worship is also **congregational**. It is not merely done on our own.

Acts 4:23-24 ~ **When they had been released, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord** and said, “O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth...

¹ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 790–791.

² John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 791.

³ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Co 10:31.

WORSHIP IN MUSIC

Worship is not only music, but it does include music!

Acts 16:25 ~ **But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;**

James 5:13 ~ **Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.**

Revelation 5:9; 14:3; 15:3 – Songs of the Heavenly Church

5 Marks of the Worship of the Church⁴

1. The worship of the church is God-centered.
2. The worship of the church is biblically formed.
3. The worship of the church is gospel-wrought.
4. The worship of the church is congregational.
5. The worship of the church is missional (Our worship declares God's glory to the world).

Our own church's Philosophy of Worship document varies only with number 5: "Christ-focused" (<https://www.mbcmi.org/about-maranatha/philosophy-of-worship/>).

Words

Colossians 3:16 ~ **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

Ephesians 5:19 ~ **speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;**

- When we sing Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, with our heart, to the Lord...
 - Is there thankfulness?
 - Is our singing from our hearts?
 - We are directing our minds and our lips to sing *WHICH WORDS?*
 - Is it to God? Is your intention that God receives these words?
- What we sing,
 - Are the songs we sing filled with words of Christ, words that are directly reflecting the light of the world?⁵
 - Are the songs full of wisdom, do they teach us, do they admonish us to view God rightly?
 - Our songs also teach, and we often remember what we **sang** better than what we **heard**.
 - We remember better what comes out of our mouths than what comes into our ears.

⁴ Matt Boswell, *Doxology and Theology: How the gospel forms the worship leader*, 7.

⁵ Douglas Sean O'Donnell, "Hymns and Songs", *The Pastor's Book*, 344... "God's Lyrics, Edification, Exaltation, Religious Affections, Theologically Comprehensive and Balanced."

Music Style

Does the style of music matter?

- When Christians gather to worship, they also sing. They always have.
- We don't know the *personal choice* of all styles used in churches over the course of history.
- Art form is not absolute, but keep in mind that various forms lead to various functions:⁶
 - Music should enhance the lyrics.
 - Music should be conducive to congregational singing.
 - Music should complement the preaching.
 - Music should be selected and played by godly and competent musicians.
- If we are to sing with our **whole heart**, we might have an equal measure of **rich music** that fills the room with the right kind of sounds that complement the words we are saying.
- Dangers: repetition, disconnected lines, misuse of word pictures (fire), emotion-driven songs rather than spiritually heightened awareness of the depths of the riches and wisdom of our God!

Lead Us!

- Those who lead ought to be qualified: They are guiding the people in a spiritual service, not merely singing and playing the right notes.
- The leader ought to direct our hearts and minds upward, not toward self or the leader or atmosphere. The leader should not confuse people and sing “off script”.
- The leader ought to be able to teach the congregation how and why we sing certain songs, guiding us to think through key lines or shape our thoughts in preparation for scripture reading or the sermon.
- Lead us to see the big picture and worship in a variety of styles/songs.

Genuine worship engages the mind; it does not bypass it (cf. 1 Cor. 14:15, 19). Moreover, God-honoring expressions of worship are characterized by decency and orderliness (1 Cor. 14:40). Churches should not promote mindless, chaotic, or worldly practices in the name of worship. Such practices undermine rather than foster the kind of worship that honors God.⁷

⁶ Douglas Sean O'Donnell, 351ff.

⁷ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 792.

Reverence vs silliness.

Martin Luter: music is the excellent gift of God

- Music should be chosen and prepared with these purposes in mind: praise, learning, mutual encouragement.
- Musical precision and musical Opinion is not as important as unity of the Spirit

Lyrics (From Pastor's book)

Our lyrics should reflect God's lyrics. Our songs should be Biblical.

Our lyrics should edify others and exalt God. Ephesians five shows that we are also addressing one another in the songs that we sing. We teach each other and encourage one another and comfort one another with joy and gratitude and reverence and respect.

Our lyrics should raise religious affections, Not ridiculous emotionalism. Spiritual truths should be moved into our heart as they move out of our mouth. Music can impact our emotions, but emotions are not a reliable barometer of spiritual authenticity.(Woodhouse)

Our lyrics should be theologically comprehensive and balanced. Our corporate should reflect “the whole of God's work in history and in the believers life, promote sanctification, raise godly emotions, and embody all the texts and themes of God's sacred revelation, whether found in classic hymns or new songs.”⁸

- Does music enhance the lyrics or the lyrics just enhancing the music?

⁸ O'Donnell, 350-351.