

WHEN WE GATHER

WEEK 6: WORSHIP IN THE WORD

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:
 - Fall 2025: Call to Worship, Music, Giving, Scripture Reading
 - January 4: Worship in Prayer
 - **February: Worship in the Word**
 - March: Worship in the Ordained Commands of Christ: Ordinances
 - April-June: 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, ²⁵not 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.

NEGLECT OF THE WORD

Example of a Worship Service deprived of the Word in the first half of the service:¹

1. “Welcome home...” followed by concert...
 2. Between a few songs- prayer (mostly for better paying jobs, better opportunities, safety)
 3. “Shout out to the worship team... y’all had a blast”
 4. After singing, maybe about Scripture, maybe over scripture
 5. Promo about starting point (“maybe you are dating us, or new to this whole Christian thing...”)
 6. Promo for following on social media
 7. Almost message, and then 5 more shout outs for birthdays... then shout outs to anyone with birthdays... then a 6/7 reference
 8. Prayer (did include prayer for other churches gathering around the word preaching the gospel)
 9. “We are going to tie scripture into the message”
 10. 46 minutes in first quotation of scripture Ephesians 1:3-14.
- Worship is often the theme of churches’ gatherings.
 - But how do churches determine what and how we worship?

It would seem crucially important for people in a service, believers and unbelievers, to hear (and/or see printed in a bulletin or flashed on a screen) verses of Scripture chosen to give a clear signal that:

“We have come to worship God. The Word is how we know about God, and therefore it is the foundation for all that we do here and for our understanding of why we have come together.”

Without hearing such a declaration, worshipers make the faulty assumption (consciously or unconsciously) that we invite ourselves into God’s presence, when in actuality **it is only by virtue of his invitation (and his opening the way through the work of Christ) that we may come before him at all.**

WORSHIP IN THE WORD

- Worship is not just singing. We don’t start worshiping and stop when the piano plays the last note.
- Worship comprises all that we do, individually and corporately, privately and publicly.
- We worship God or we worship something else.
- What shapes and forms our worship?

¹ Local GR church. See Kurt for details if you really need to know.

Scripture Reading

- **1 Timothy 4:13** ~ “Until I come, **give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching**”
- “The holy Scriptures are to be **read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God,**”²
- “You can never have a Christian mind without reading the Scriptures regularly because *you can’t be profoundly influenced by that which you do not know.*”—Kent Hughes

Scripture Singing

- What is the content of our corporate praise? See Col 3:16 on page 4.
- 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.”³

Scripture Expositing

1 Peter 1:23, 25 ~ “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is, through the living and enduring word of God.... And this is the word which was preached to you.*”

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 ~ Now I make known to you, brethren, **the gospel**

which I preached to you,	<i>I preached the gospel</i>
which also you received,	<i>you received the gospel</i>
in which also you stand,	<i>you stand in the gospel</i>
2 by which also you are saved,	<i>you are being saved in the gospel</i>

if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, *you hold fast the preached word*
unless you believed in vain.

2 Timothy 2:3-5 ~ **preach the word;** be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 **But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

- The gravity of spiritual realities in preaching the word
- The endurance in preaching the word
- The Gospel clarity in preaching the word
- The ministry fulfilled in preaching the word

² Westminster Larger Catechism, question 157

³ Douglas Sean O’Donnell, “Hymns and Songs”, *The Pastor’s Book*, “God’s Lyrics, Edification, Exaltation, Religious Affections, Theologically Comprehensive and Balanced.”, 350-351.

Nehemiah 8:1-18

- 1. The people **gathered** around the Word given by the Yahweh to Israel
- 3. Ezra **read** the law
- 3. The people **gave attention**
- 4. A **podium** was made for the purpose of bringing the law
- 4. **Levites stood** by Ezra (anointed priests supporting the preaching)
- 5. **People stood** in reverence to the Word opened
- 6. **Ezra praised** God in prayer
- 6. The people **gave reverence** to God in bowing down
- 7. The law was **explained** to the people
- 8. The book was **read, translated/interpreted** to give the sense so that they understood the reading.
- 9. The people **responded** with holy affection for their sin and fasted (9:1).
- 18. Ezra **read** from the book of the law of God daily during the feast.

Scripture in Other Gatherings of our Body

2 Timothy 3:16-17 **“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

Acts 15:30-31 ~ **“So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.”**

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.**

1 Thessalonians 5:11ff

- Encourage and build one another up
- Leadership of the church instructs
- Admonish, encourage, help, be patient
- Accept God’s Word (prophetic utterances) and examine/test for the good teaching!

SCRIPTURE IN EVERY PART OF OUR GATHERING

1. Why does Scripture play such an important role in our services?
2. **How and where** do we see and hear Scripture?
3. What **role does the OT** play in the service? Only the NT, or all scripture?
4. **Preach the word!**
5. **Emphasis:** Do we have a message we *tie scripture in* or learn the message from the Scripture?
6. **Gospel:** What do we preach?
7. Evaluation:
 - a. Are there ways the Word could be more central in our services?
 - b. Question: Could the Bible itself become an idol?