

# WHEN WE GATHER

## WEEK 7: WORSHIP AND ORDINANCES

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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**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 15: Worship in the Word
  - **March 1: Worship in the Ordained Commands of Christ: Ordinances**
  - April-June: One Another's, Witness, Homes, Missions Moments

### WHY DO WE GATHER?

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**Hebrews 10:24-25** ~ “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> 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.

### ORDINANCES

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1. What is an ordinance?
2. Why do we have them as a part of our gatherings?
3. Who is involved?
4. What do we do in them that contributes to our corporate worship?
5. How should we celebrate the ordinances?

**Matthew 28:18-20** ~ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 “Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 *teaching them to observe* all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

### **Ordinance:**

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- What Jesus commanded disciples to do! He ordained that the church should baptize believers and celebrate the Lord’s Supper. These are symbolic acts of obedience to the Lord and a testimony of what Christ has accomplished and is accomplishing.
- We don’t call them sacraments (sign and seal of grace *in and through* the act itself) because grace is not mediated through the act itself but through the act that it represents.
  - Baptism represents the work Christ accomplished by the Spirit in regenerating us in salvation. No new work is done in this obedient act for our soul.
  - The Lord’s Supper represents the work Christ accomplished on the cross in redeeming man. No redeeming work is done in this obedient act for our soul.

### **Frequency and Setting**

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**When** should we have Baptisms?

- Once a year?
- Immediately following salvation?
- 2-4 times a year?
- With a preceding formal class, or with an interview, or simply spontaneous?

**Where?**

- At the river, in the bathtub, Pond vs. baptismal?

**When** should we celebrate the Lord’s Supper until he returns?

- Annually, Monthly, Weekly, Daily?
- Sunday morning or Sunday night service?
- Also at a special service? Have a unique service just for Communion?
- What about on a ministry trip, with shut-ins, and multi-church regional gatherings?

How does the frequency and setting **help us to corporately worship** when we celebrate New Life in Him and Ongoing Remembrance of Him who saved us?

## **Participation and Worship**

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- Who can baptize?
- How do we worship in a baptism service?
- What are the fruits of a baptism service?
- Who can lead the Lord's Supper?
- How do we worship corporately and individually in the Lord's Supper?
- What are the fruits of a communion service?

## **Individual Act vs Corporate Event**

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Baptism and communion are “often directed as expressions of personal faith rather than corporate identity. They don't celebrate the commonality of the church- Redeemed sinners united into one body and gathered at the foot of the cross to share in Christ's sacrifice. They're erroneously observed as mere individual acts, with only individual significance and individual results... **We're united in love, faith, and purpose. Baptism and communion are public expressions of that unity.**”<sup>1</sup>

### Corporate Benefits of Communion:

1. Communion is “a collective Reminder of God's provision through Jesus' death. It unites the Church as those who have been rescued, transformed, and grafted into God's family- All made possible through the sacrifice of Christ.” Communion points us back to His life and death.
2. Communion unites us in love for our common Savior.
3. Communion gives profound testimony to His sacrifice to the unsaved world.
4. Communion builds in us an anticipation of his return (1 Cor 11:26)
5. Communion helps guard the church against the presence of unchecked sin (1 Cor 11:27-30).<sup>2</sup>

**Celebrate these reverently, corporately, frequently, faithfully.**

## **BAPTISM AND LORD'S SUPPER**

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1. Baptism: “ An initiatory washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit... an outward symbol of an inward spiritual transformation”<sup>3</sup>
2. Lord's Supper: The ongoing obedience for the church to take celebrate the work of Christ in united fellowship together (1 Cor 10:16-17).

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *Your Local Church and Why it Matters*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 23-24

<sup>3</sup> **Paul K. Jewett**, “Baptism,” in Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, 466. See also “Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Jesus Christ performed once as the initiation of such a believer into a community of believers, the church.” in **Thomas J. Nettles**, “Baptist View: Baptism as a Symbol of Christ's Saving Work,” in *Understanding Four Views on Baptism*, ed. John H. Armstrong and Paul E. Engle, Zondervan Counterpoints Collection (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 25.

## Worship in Baptism

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- To be done in the name of the Trinitarian God
- Testifies to God's saving work
- Opportunity to remember what saves
- Opportunity to demonstrate bold declaration of submission to Christ
- Worship in **obedience**, worship to **Trinitarian God**, Worship in ongoing **submission to Christ**.<sup>4</sup>

## Worship in Lord's Supper

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- We worship Christ in remembering his death until he comes.
- This is not private mysticism, but communal proclamation, a visible unity of the body!<sup>5</sup>

What is The Lord's Supper?<sup>6</sup>

- The Lord's Supper is for Christians only. It is a family meal that celebrates having already partaken of Christ and being in fellowship with His people (1 Cor 10:16–17).
- There are penalties for unbelievers partaking. They eat and drink judgement to themselves, if they partake of the Table, while not having partaken of Christ. (1 Cor 11:27–31)
- The Lord's Supper is a corporate, family meal, administered by the church. It is not something we partake of privately at home.
- Because the church administers the Lord's Supper, the church is responsible to make sure that only Christians partake of the Supper. The biblical way for the church to know if people profess to be Christians is not if such people claim to have prayed a prayer, but if they have testified publicly of their faith in Christ through believers' baptism. Believers' baptism is the public declaration of faith in Christ.

**Five "Looks":** 1. Look **Within** (self-examination to consider our obedience and affirm unity). 2. Look **Around** (in commitment to the body). 3. Look **Back** (in remembrance). 4. Look **Ahead** (to the return of Christ and the feast to come). 5. Look **Up** to God in worship and expectation of promise.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Craig Houston, "How is Baptism a Part of Worship?", <https://churchandfamilylife.com/resources/60ca754e23fa965169a3c986>

<sup>5</sup> R. Kent Hughes, Preaching on 1 Corinthians 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> David De Bruyn, Why Baptist Before the Lord's Supper, <https://g3min.org/why-baptism-before-the-lords-supper/>

<sup>7</sup> John Hammett, *40 Questions about Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, 305-307.