

What Is Worship? (and other questions that have been asked)

Text: John 4:19-24

Some go to church to take a walk. Some go to church to laugh and talk.
Some go to church to meet a friend. Some go to church, their time to spend.
Some go to church to meet another. Some go to church, a fault to cover.
Some go to church for speculation. Some go to church for observation.
Some go to church to doze and nod. The wise go there to worship God.
- Author Unknown

As we have studied the acts of worship we have seen that it is plain that God wants us to worship Him as a group (church). It is also clear that God has prescribed that we worship Him on the first day of the week by certain acts. These acts are to: preach (teaching) sing, pray, observe the Lord's Supper, and to give of our means. Only those acts approved by God are acceptable to Him.

Can anything else be worship? Yes!

The word worship occurs over 100 times in the Bible. There are at least 5 different words in the New Testament that are translated by our English word "worship."

Words for worship.

proskuneo, "to make obeisance, (obey sance) do reverence to" (from pros, "towards," and kuneo, "to kiss"), It is used of an act of homage or reverence

sebomai , "to revere," stressing the feeling of awe or devotion,

sebazomai, akin to No. 2, "to honor religiously,"

latreuo, "to serve, to render religious service or homage," Matt. 25:40

therapeuo, "to serve, do service to"

eusebeo, "to act piously towards,"

A consideration of the above verbs shows that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deeds done in such acknowledgment.- Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.

Rick Warren in The Purpose-Driven Life says, "Anything you do that brings pleasure to God is an act of worship."

I. What Worship Isn't: A lot of misconceptions exist about worship. There are many others things that could fit into this discussion, but these are important. Worship isn't...

A. About WHAT we know.

1. What we know can get us a long way in life, but not in worship. I know the rules of football fairly well, that doesn't mean that the Bengal's are going to call me anytime soon and ask me to play for them.

2. We know the order of service, but that doesn't mean we worship. We can know the songs by heart, but that doesn't mean we worship. We can know what to say and do, but that doesn't mean we worship.

B. OUR idea.

1. We didn't think up the need for worship. Someone wasn't sitting around one day and said, "Hey, I think we should worship God."

2. True worship is not a human innovation.

3. Some of what we do in worship is born of human creativity. For example humans, using their God-given creativity, wrote many of the songs we sing.

C. SPECTATOR event.

1. Millions of people will watch the professional football. Only about 100 or so people per game will be involved including officials, coaches and players. Not all the players will even get into the game. Football is, by and large a spectator event.

2. Many times, people look at a worship service as a spectator event. They see themselves as the audience, the person up front as the performer, and God as the prompter. Not the case.

D. Merely PHYSICAL.

1. We may attend a worship service and go through the motions. We sing, take Lord's supper, and say "Amen," and other things without ever engaging anything else in the event. Our minds are 100 different places.

2. Worship is in Spirit as well as truth!

3. Sitting in the church house is no more worshiping than sitting in the hen house is laying an egg.

E. Just SINGING.

1. Sometimes we say, "I enjoyed the worship portion of the service." Meaning that we enjoyed the singing.

2. While singing is part of worship, it is not all of worship.

F. Done just at CHURCH. (The assemble is required) Heb. 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

1. Sometimes we say, "I am going to church to worship." A church building isn't necessary for worship.

2. A building isn't even necessary for worship. (We can worship outside)

G. INSINCERE.

1. Half-hearted worship is not worship at all.

2. Worship can't be faked. "We may worship God imperfectly, but we cannot worship him insincerely."

II. What Worship Is: As mentioned earlier, there are many definitions of worship. Let's look at some things that worship is.

A. About WHO we know.

This is in contrast to not being about what we know. Worship is about knowing God. The Samaritan woman knew about worship.

B. GOD'S idea.

This is in contrast to worship being our idea. Worship is for God's benefit, not ours. It's not about what we can get out of it; it's about what we give to God.

C. PARTICIPATION event.

The Super Bowl. None of us are in any condition to participate in the Super Bowl. God expects us to get involved. God is the audience. The person up front is the prompter, and the congregation is the performers.

D. SPIRITUAL.

Worship should engage our spirit. Jesus said that God is spirit. Worship is our spirit engaging God's Spirit. It's not just going through the motions.

E. MULTIFACETED.

Every part of the worship service is worship; the singing, praying, reading of the Word, preaching and the giving.

F. Done EVERYWHERE.

We should have public and private worship, and all we do should be for God's glory: However not everything we do is worship.

G. SINCERE.

We have to be sincere. We have to really mean what we are doing. It must be true as well. We can be sincerely wrong.

Question 2 What about Communion to shut-ins?

I personally have no problem with someone taking communion to the shut-ins, so long as they also involve them in the other aspects of worship. The Lord's Supper is only part of the "worship". If communion is taken, prayers should be offered, songs should be sung, the opportunity to give of they means should be make available, and some sort of teaching (preaching) should be done (or made available to them, such as a tape or CD of the sermon, "In Search of The Lord's Way", etc). Even if we just read the scriptures to them. I do not feel that they are forsaking the worship if they are shut-in and do not worship with the church weekly. (True shut-ins cannot get out)

Questions about giving

Question 3 How do I set money aside?

It becomes a matter of priorities. Careful consideration must be made (purposing in your heart) then "ear marking" that amount (setting aside). Then cheerfully giving on the 1st day of the week. That money is not an optional amount or a fund to dip into when you want to eat out, etc. If situations change in your life (more or less money) you may have to repurpose.

Question 4 What do I do about my contribution when out of town or sic?

The eldership has established a weekly amount that we need in order to make the budget. (Pay bills and be involved in the programs we have committed to) that amount does not change because I am out of town or sick. Most elderships ask that you leave the contribution with someone to put in for you or make it up when you get back. Your only other option as I see it is to give your contribution where you are visiting when out of town. I have always believed you should give where you are being feed! 99.9% of the time that is in your home congregation.

Question 5 What if I don't agree with everything the elders are doing?

Do the same as you do with your taxes! By all means express your disagreement with the elders. However, you are commanded to give as you have been prospered. They are charged with the operations of the church. You will not be held accountable for their mishandling (if indeed they do mishandle) but you will be charged with not giving as you have been prospered. (Same as taxes)