

Questions About Worship

Part 1

Int.

1. Aim: To answer some of the many questions that people ask about the worship service.
2. John 4 - Woman of Samaria - Jesus was talking with her
 - a. Talking about worship and the proper place
 - b. John 4:24 "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - c. Word worship =
 - i. English word derives from Anglo-Saxon meaning - worth, the worthiness of another, and particularly of admiration or reverence for God.
 - ii. Greek - a word that means to make obeisance, do reverence to, to revere, to render religious service or homage [1]
3. Worship to God is important.
 - a. The first murder was committed by a man who had not worshiped God properly.
 - b. It is vital that we worship as God has commanded. Mt. 15:9
4. This lesson is about questions people ask about worship.

Discussion**I. IS THERE ANY BENEFIT TO ME WHEN I WORSHIP?**

- A. YES! It helps me to grow
- B. We tend to become like those we admire and revere
 1. The more we love and reverence God, the more like Him we become in character.
 2. Genuine Christian worship makes us more Christlike, and hence more Godlike, because he was the fullest expression of deity to man. [2]

II. DO I REALLY HAVE TO ATTEND ANY WORSHIP SERVICE?

- A. Yes! Jn.14:15
- B. One cannot be a good Christian and not be regular in worship.
 1. No one is forced to follow Christ.
 2. However when the choice is made to follow Christ, man has no choice in laying down the conditions of acceptance. Christ gives the terms and man must lay aside his own wishes and surrender his will to the Lord's will.
 3. Man has no right to decide about attending church services. If he is going to be a faithful follower of Christ he must attend church services and worship God scripturally.
 4. This means that he will observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week, singing and making melody with the heart, giving, praying, and studying the word of the Lord.
 5. Obedience to Christ requires it. Obedience to Christ is essential to salvation.
Heb. 5:9

C. What about the extra services? Do I have to attend them?

1. This is referring to the mid-week services, gospel meetings, V.B.S., seminars, and special meetings.
2. These services are held for the good of the church to help strengthen the members.
3. If a person's heart is right he is going to see how much he can do for the Lord rather than argue for doing as little as possible.
4. Tit. 3:1 "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready unto every good work."
 - a. Is the Sunday night service a good work?
 - b. Is the Midweek Bible study a good work?
 - c. The answer is very obvious.
 - d. Then let us be ready unto every good work.
 - e. Ps. 122:1 "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."
 - (1) Context - In the time of its writing the people had to make a journey to Jerusalem 3 times a year for the great feasts.
 - (2) This Psalm and some of the others were written for the people to chant on their journey's to Jerusalem and on their way home.
 - (3) The "house of the Lord" would have been the tabernacle, or tent-like structure, erected for the place of worship.
 - (4) This psalm expresses delight at the invitation and opportunity to go to the house of the Lord.

- f. This ought to be the feeling of the truly “godly” person. The word “godly” comes from a word meaning to worship well. Church attendance is not the sum total of godliness.
- g. But those who seldom attend, or who go only the minimum they dare, or who are bored most of the time; those who go mostly out of a sense of duty, those who go to please friends, or those who attend just to set a good example, fall short of the standard of worshipping well.

III. WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE THE WORSHIP SERVICES MORE MEANINGFUL?

- A. A common criticism of worship is that it is so routine.
 - 1. Some have charged that our worship is so formalized and routine that it is lacking in variety.
 - 2. This they say makes the worship services boring, and not as meaningful. It is, they say, lacking in spirituality.
- B. Answer by G.K. Wallace
 - 1. He makes a yearly visit to the graves of his parents in a distant State.
 - 2. It was a time for reflection, and he was drawn there because of his deep love for them, and now his remembrance of them.
 - 3. He asked “Really now, would I think that this visit would hold more meaning for me if I entered the cemetery by the East gate, since I came in the West gate last year? And next year, to make this visit meaningful, should I plan to enter in by the South Gate? Is the direction from which I come, etc. that which makes this visit meaningful and helpful to me?”

C. Application to our Worship

1. Taking the Lord's Supper is to be meaningful to us because we discern the Lord's Body. I Cor. 11:29. We remember what he did for us.
2. Is its meaning conditioned on how the men approach the table -- whether seated on the front pews, or marching down the center aisles, or approaching the table from four directions, or if the lights must be turned down low, etc.?
3. If so, then I have missed the whole point of this item of worship.
4. Some have thought that spirituality in worship was dependent on the physical arrangements such as dimming lights, forming a circle, holding the hands of one another, and from that testifying, and relating of experiences.
5. God's people are to be spiritual people - I Pet. 1:16
 - a. He tells us of spiritual duties.
 - b. If we do what He says, in the way He says it, and with the meaning He gives to it, then we'll be engaging in a spiritual worship.

IV. WHAT ABOUT SPONTANEOUS WORSHIP?

A. What is spontaneous worship?

1. This is the idea that one spontaneously bursts forth in song, prayer or testimony.
2. There is no set order and everything just happens.
3. Someone will begin a song and everyone sings. Then someone may start to pray. Then another time they will have "chain prayers" in which all who desire are invited to participate.
4. Sometimes the lights are dimmed and they ask those present to gather in a circle and hold hands.

5. The speaking from anyone in the group is usually in the form of testifying as to how much more fulfilled and happy their lives are since they “accepted Christ.”
- B. There is no authority for this type of worship in the N.T.
1. I Cor. 14:40 “Let all things be done decently and in order”
 2. The word “in order” comes from a Greek word which means = an arrangement, order, in due order, in contrast to the confusion of the local church there at Corinth.
 3. Spontaneous worship is a violation of this command.
 4. The N.T. does not specify the exact sequence of the items of worship , but it has specified what they are and that the services are to be by plan or arrangement.
 - a. The number of songs or prayers used, whether the services are opened or closed with song or prayer, whether the L.S. is observed before or after the sermon are things which may be varied.
 - b. But this is not to be done haphazardly or spontaneously with no plan or arrangement beforehand.
 5. The idea of testifying or giving a testimony is out of order.
 - a. The testimony of the Apostles and inspired men of the first century is recorded for us in the New Testament.
 - b. They were eye witnesses of His resurrection and gave testimony of His divinity.
 - c. But we cannot testify today, because we have not seen Him!
 - d. The expression “witnessing for Christ” is not scriptural because it is not found in the N.T.

- C. True New Testament Worship has been restored.
1. Those who accuse us of ritualism and traditionalism attempt to cure this situation by adding the rituals and traditions of men.
 2. We must hold fast to the traditions of the Apostles.
 3. Our Worship can be improved and made more spiritual by improving the worshiper and not by modifying the worship.

CONCLUSION

1. These are just a few of the many questions people ask about worship.
2. Next week we will consider some other questions such as:
 - a. Are we worshipping God in everything we do?
 - b. What is the difference between worshipping God and serving God?
 - c. What about Choral groups?
 - d. Who should take part in the worship services?
 - e. What about a woman speaking out in Bible class?
 - f. Can Women serve the Lord's Supper?
3. If you have a question or questions that you would like answered be sure to tell me.
4. Jn.4:24 We must "...worship him in spirit and in truth."

Sources Consulted

1. Vines Expository Dict. of N.T. Words - p. 235-236
2. A.L.C. May 3, 1981 - p. 210.
3. Tract by A.G. Hobbs "Is Church Attendance Essential?"
4. File on Worship - bulletin article by Kenneth L. Jones "Spontaneous Worship" and bulletin article "Which gate of the Cemetery?"