

Disciplines of the Christian Life: Corporate worship

If our corporate worship isn't the expression of our individual worshiping lives, it is unacceptable. If you think you can live anyway you want and then go to church on Sunday morning and turn on worship with the saints, you're wrong. – **John MacArthur**

Corporate worship is what happens when the body of Christ assembles to hear with one heart and speak with one voice the words, praises, prayers, petitions, and thanks fitting to Christian worship. – **Constance M. Cherry**

Hebrews 10: 1, 2, 19 – 25

1) Enter with Confidence

- Under the law of Moses, the community of Israel had to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem where they had to offer sacrifices. They had to offer animal sacrifices year after year for the forgiveness of their sins, which a priest had to do on their behalf. However, only the high priest could enter into the Holy of holies into the presence of God on behalf of the people. Anyone else entering the Holy of holies would be put to death.
- Now the temple worship was only a shadow of things to come.
- When Jesus died on the cross the veil of the temple was torn in two giving every person access into the very presence of God through his ultimate sacrifice for sins, once for all.
 - He was the sacrifice and he was the high priest who opened the way for all of us to enter the Most holy place through his blood.
- Although unauthorised people entering the Most Holy place would have been put to death and so would have done so with fear. However, we have been given full authority by Jesus to enter into the presence of God through his blood that was sacrificed on our behalf.
 - We therefore enter into the presence of God with confidence know that we, and our worship, will be accepted by God.
 - We were not acceptable to God because of our sin, but we have been made acceptable by the blood of Jesus that has cleansed us from all sin and made us righteous in the sight of God.
 - We have no more reason to fear as we have not only been allowed, to enter the presence of the Lord, but we have been invited to do so – let us draw near.
- If God has made such an effort to open the way into his presence then it is an insult to him for us not to enter into his presence in worship.
- Although God's presence pervades all space due to his omnipresence, and thus envelops every one of us that doesn't mean that we have entered into His presence consciously being aware of him that leads us in worship with awe.
 - God is always aware of being close to us, but we aren't always aware of His presence.
 - We may live a lifestyle of worship wanting to be pleasing to God. However, we do that within the context of life with all its distractions. There are times when we have to come aside to focus on him and worship him without the distractions.
- In the end, worship can never be a performance, something you're pretending or putting on. It's got to be an overflow of your heart...Worship is about getting personal with God, drawing close to God.

Matt Redman

2) Enter with sincerity and focus

- When we come to God we come with sincere hearts.
 - That means we come truthfully and honestly wanting to worship God because we have recognised who he is and what he has done for us.
 - We want to give him all the homage due to his name.
- By bowing down in worship we are subjugating ourselves completely to his sovereignty
 - To subjugate yourself means to allow God to conquer your lives and take full control over them.
 - It means that you are making yourself subordinate to him and letting him be the absolute ruler of your life. Actually, it is merely acknowledging that you are already subordinate to him and he is sovereign over your life.
- We come in the full assurance of faith that we have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
 - We worship because we believe who God is and his place as Lord of all.
- We enter into worship focussed on God and what he's done for us
 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (vs. 23)
 - Christ in us is the hope of glory onto whom we unswervingly hold. That means we don't deviate from him at all.
 - A car may swerve out of the way of a dog crossing the road or a pothole. In Christ we set our hope and don't deviate from him no matter what life throws at us. Our hearts are to remain true to him in worship, for he remains faithful to us in all things.

3) Enter together

- Notice that each time "Let us" is used it uses the plural pronoun "us"
- Let us spur one another one toward love and good deeds.
 - This is used in the context of worship.
 - We gather to worship God and to spur others on to do the same. Love and good deeds come out of hearts of worship
 - Paul and Silas received their call to the Gentiles and were encouraged and sent out by the church.
- We don't give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing
 - This is an instruction towards corporate worship.
 - We gather together with the saints to worship God as the body of Christ.
 - The believers in Acts gathered together constantly
 - Acts 2: 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
 - Acts 2: 46 – 47 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
- Reasons for worshipping together as a body
 - Spur one another on towards love and good deeds
 - Mutual encouragement
 - Hear the word of God
 - Prayer – this includes all types of prayer and praise
 - Break bread – remembering what God has done for us in Jesus
 - Have meals together
 - Receiving new believers