

**GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS!** – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

6 2 26 V2n5 The Church Family GATHERS to Worship!

**In real Congregational Christian Worship — 1.** We gather to ASCRIBE worth to God; **2.** We gather to PROSTRATE ourselves before God in submission to the truth of His Word; **3.** We gather to offer UNTO HIM honor, praise, adoration, and thanksgiving; **4.** We gather to RECOGNIZE and REJOICE in God's glory, greatness, power, victory, majesty, and rule; **5.** We gather to offer unto God most of all — ourselves; and willing heart offerings so as to support KINGDOM ministries around the world; **6.** We SCATTER out into the world to live and proclaim the GOSPEL!

**The Result of a Genuine Worship Service will be that we go forth into OUR world living lives of love, purity, compassion, forgiveness, joy, peace, and more. We will go forth on mission to make Christ visible and known to the lost world around us.** When we adapt ourselves IN GENUINE WORSHIP to the True and Living God — we will then receive FRUIT from worship— namely, **(1) JOY IN GOD; (2) Renewed power to win daily spiritual battles; (3) Fresh boldness as witnesses for Christ!** (Acts 4:23-33)

## **I. Guidance for God-centered Worship — Exodus 20:1-10**

**1. Exodus 20:1-3** — the exclusive object of our worship must be the one, the true and the living, triune God, Himself. In the worship of God, **no room is allowed in the Bible for** idols, icons, saints,

angels, Mary, (the earthly Mother of Jesus); nor of any object, nor any other being in the entire universe.

**2. Exodus 20:4-6** — the manner of true worship must be spiritual and not physical. Thus, we are forbidden by God in His Holy Word to attempt to worship God by means of visual representations.

All attempts, (INCLUDING MOVIES/DRAMA), to visually portray GOD the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit **obscure [HIDE, VEIL] God's glory.** (Deut. 4:15-16; Isaiah 40:18; 46:5-10; Rom. 1:22-23) Instead of man-made images, ACTORS, and/or 'paintings' supposedly portraying true DEITY— **God reveals Himself through the Word of God and by His Spirit** (Ps. 16:7- 9; 2 Cor. 3:18; Isa. 53; Revelation 1:13-17); **and He declares Himself through creation! (Ps. 19:1-6)**

**3. Exodus 20:7**— the specific attitude for true worship is that of reverence for God and, thus, reverence for God's Name. The third commandment not only means that we do not CURSE; but also, that we refrain from using God's name in our jokes or humor or in any cheap or insincere fashion. Moreover, as a Christian we are 'taking the name' of Jesus — His name is not to be taken in vain. His name is not to be taken in a mere empty show of religion — **to be singing 'Praise the LORD' while secretly proceeding to love sin is to greatly misuse the holy name of Jesus!**

**4. Exodus 20:8-11**— certainly all of our time is to be used in such a way as to glorify God. Nevertheless, the principles of Scripture call for the specific setting aside of one day in seven for rest, good deeds, and for corporate worship. (Isaiah 58:13-14) Living, vibrant love relationships require and are **inwardly motivated** to give sacred, specific time! THERE IS NO LEGALISM here, only love!

## II. Jesus Unfolds the Nature of New Covenant Worship—

**John 4:19- 21.** Christian Worship is not a matter of a sacred, physical locality. **\*\* True Worship must be in spirit!** WORSHIP is not mere ceremony or fleshly incited emotions from high energy music and/or gyrations and/or rituals. **Rather, worship in spirit** relates to being in accord with the Holy Spirit, aided by the Holy Spirit, and is a manifestation of sincerity in hearts which are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. **Moreover, HE is the HOLY Spirit and He is the Spirit of TRUTH; and His master passion is to Exalt JESUS!** (Matthew 15:18; John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:13)

THEREFORE: **Worship that is "in the Spirit"** will manifest and promote **(1)** Holiness, **(2)** Loyalty to Biblical Truth, and **(3)** Will exalt Jesus! Exuberance, various physical expressions, may or may not be the expressions of being "in the Spirit"— they may only be a man-manufactured display of religious flesh that makes God sick, as in Isaiah 1:2-15; and/or that brings His wrath, as in Exodus 32.

**\*\* True Worship must be in truth! Worship in truth is worship which is in agreement with God's Word.** (John 17:17) True worship has God and God alone as the object of the worship being offered. (Ex. 20:3) **Moreover, worship 'in truth' yields forth obedience to God!** (Isa. 1:15-20) In the true worship of God we receive and heed: *"Preach the Word; ... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)*

**SADLY, in our day there is a growing rejection as to preaching the "Thus saith the LORD!"** Instead, many are seeking to 'grow churches' by means of foolish stories, by man-made fictions, by promoting temporal patriotism; and/or by an abundance of 'so

called fun!' (2 Timothy 4:1-4) **Give the masses what they want and they love it! (Jeremiah 5:30- 31)** In many places folks are led to believe that they can continue to love the world and keep their sin and have the Savior also! **In reality, that IS how the Harlot Church is built!** However, those who know and follow the LAMB, (like Noah), will live and preach RIGHTEOUSNESS! (Heb. 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5)

### III. Biblical Expressions in the Corporate Worship of God!

**1. PREACHING/TEACHING** (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-4): The preaching of the Word of God is critical and central in corporate worship. *"To worship God, we must know who God is, but we cannot know who God is unless God first chooses to reveal Himself to us. God has done this in the Bible; THUS, the Bible and the teaching of the Bible MUST be central in our worship."* (J. M. Boice)

**2. AMEN/HALLELUJAH/PRAISE THE LORD:** In the worship of God, it is a good thing for the whole congregation (in response to the preached/taught Word of God) to freely and expressively speak forth words of Praise to God; and to openly say, "AMEN!"

**Saying 'AMEN' is saying "Yes!" to God!** It is saying, **"So be it LORD!"**... "So be it in my life, LORD!" **Nehemiah 8:6** — "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, **AMEN, AMEN...**" **IN 1 Chronicles 16:8-36** — A great, God-centered Psalm was read before the people ..."And all the people said, **AMEN**, and praised the LORD!" **Psalms 106:48** — "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, **AMEN, PRAISE YE THE LORD!** **Revelation 7:9-12** — All those in heaven are worshiping God and saying,

**"AMEN!** Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, BE UNTO OUR GOD forever and ever. **"AMEN! AMEN! ALLELUIA!"**

**3. SING/SPEAK PRAISE:** In the worship of God, it is a good thing for the congregation to freely and expressively SING and/or SPEAK praise unto the LORD! **Psalm 95:1** — "O come, let US sing unto the LORD. Let US make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." **Ephesians 5:19** — "Speaking to YOURSELVES in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD!" (Col. 3:16; Matt.26:30)

**4. GIVE TESTIMONIES:** It is a good thing to give TESTIMONIES in the midst of the congregation! Here are just a few Biblical examples: Psalm 22:22-25; 35:18; 66:13-16; 107:1-2; 107:31-32.

**\*\* Psalm 22:22, 25 — *I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.*** My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear Him. Psalm 35:18— I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise Thee among much people.

**NOTE:** Testifying of the LORD'S work in your life, **(1)** not only gives honor to God; **(2)** it not only BUILDS UP/ENCOURAGES fellow believers; **(3)** but it is also a powerful witness to the lost who may be present!

**CONSIDER THE IMPACT THE FOLLOWING PRACTICE WILL MAKE ...** when before Sunday School; DURING and between Sunday School and the Worship hour; after the worship hour, during lunch; AND in the neighborhood, or when at work — testimonies like these are shared: **"This week ... or today ... or from Daily Bible**

reading, or from the Sunday School lesson; or from the preached Word of God, etc. — GOD SPOKE TO ME from/through His Word!”  
 ... convicting ... encouraging ... instructing ...  
 rebuking/correcting ...” OR ... “GOD SPOKE TO ME TODAY and brought me from death to life BY THE GOSPEL!

IMPORTANT NOTE: "SINCE SUCH POWERFUL OPPORTUNITIES ARE PRESENT— THEREFORE, when we READ/STUDY the Word of God and/or when we participate in a group Bible Study and/or ... when we sit under the sound of the preaching of the Word of God, we will find it helpful to ask ourselves questions like:

Is there a sin to confess? Are there promises to claim? Are there commands of God to obey? Are there examples to follow? Is there error to avoid? Is there truth to believe? Is there PRAISE and THANKSGIVING to give to God? **From what we glean, we have good news to TESTIFY in the midst of the Congregation: Psalm 35:18** — I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people. **Psalm 66:16** — Come and hear ... and I will declare what He has done for my soul.

#### **IV. The Awesome Power of Positive Testimonies!**

The Psalmist said, "I will remember the works of the LORD... I will meditate also of all Thy works, and talk of all Thy doings." (**Psalm 77:11- 12**) **The early disciples of Jesus said**, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (**Acts 4:20**) The Woman at the Well, after her saving encounter with Jesus Christ, cried out, "Come, see a man who told me all the things

I ever did!" (John 4:29)

**Positive, God-honoring testimonies are powerful instruments in the hands of God to, (1) Encourage our own hearts, (2) Lift up the spirits of other saints and/or to (3) Bring others to Christ!** Psalm 73 is a powerful example of such!

The Psalmist began to THINK about the prosperity of the wicked. The more he let his mind run with these thoughts, the more despondent he became. He was beginning to conclude that it was but a vain and useless thing to live for God's honor. But thankfully, he realized that if he opened his mouth and spoke all of his murmuring that many of God's children would be led astray! So, he kept his mouth shut! (Ps. 73:15-16)

And he made a choice to go to the place designated for worship and hear the Word of God. (Ps. 73:17) There he was reminded of the present fears and of the dreadful later end of every person who is not saved. He was also freshly envisioned of the abundant blessings that he possessed as God's redeemed child.

**Psalm 73, concludes with a commitment to DECLARE God's works! Psalm 40 and Psalm 51 powerfully demonstrate that when we give testimonies of praise for God's Amazing Grace dealings with us — the lost and the saved will "... see it ... and shall trust in the LORD ... and sinners shall be converted unto God!" (Ps. 40:1-3; 51:12-15)**

**Truly one of the most effective tools God has given us for encouragement and for EVANGELISM is the power of godly, positive testimonies.** \*\*\* It is very encouraging, faith-building and Kingdom-building... \*\*\* **(1)** To speak well of God! (This

is for our own need and simply because HE is worthy!) **(2)** To speak well of one another in Christ, **(3)** And to speak well of the local church family to which God has joined you. TELL IT! Speak it! Write it! Tell the Good news! Your story may be short and simple. It may be longer and more detailed. ***But only God knows just how powerful and how far will be the godly influence of your "SPEAKING WELL" TESTIMONY!***

## V. PHYSICAL POSTURES!

In the worship of God, it is a good thing for a congregation to stand, to kneel, to bow, etc. In the Word of God, we find various physical postures in worship conveying gratitude, reverence, submission, humility, and/or dependence, etc. **Yes, mere physical actions can become mechanical and/or hypocritical; and make God sick— Isaiah 1:2-15.** Yes, we must come to God in worship with right heart attitudes. But also, among those right attitudes is the submissive, godly embracing of Biblical expressions in worship, such as the ones we are setting forth from Scripture in this study.

**Note:** The fact that there are those who "get in the flesh" and just put on a show, rather than truly worship God — DOES NOT GIVE US LIBERTY TO IGNORE OR REJECT STANDARD BIBLICAL PATTERNS!

**HANDS and HEART in WORSHIP:** In the worship of God it is a good thing for our hearts and hands to blend in worship to God. "Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift MY HANDS toward your most holy place." **(Psalm 28:2) EXTENDED HANDS** reveal the worshipper in a posture of faith, looking to God for mercy and grace. **(Psalm 88:9b) LIFTED UP HANDS** are also in the

context of praise to God for his greatness. "**Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD... Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD!**" (Psalm 134:1-2) God inspired the Apostle Paul to write: "I will therefore that men PRAY everywhere, **LIFTING UP HOLY HANDS**, without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim 2:8)

## **VI. Bottom Lines as to Genuine Worship!**

**"The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's church is common and tragic.** It is the loss that brings us, sadly, (1) to transform worship into entertainment, (2) gospel preaching into marketing, (3) being and becoming Christ-like into feeling good about ourselves, and (4) faithfulness into being successful...

**THE GREAT NEED OF THE HOUR: We must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs.** God is sovereign in worship; we are not. Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success." [As normal... a number of sources used in developing this article.]

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell

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## **SUNDAY SERVICES for JUNE 7, 14, 21, 28**

**[1] Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes.

**[2] WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

**SPECIAL SERVICES: JUNE 7 — FELLOWSHIP/ Covered-Dish lunch, after morning worship!**

JUNE 21 — LORD'S SUPPER // Home Groups

JUNE 28 — 5:00PM WORSHIP SERVICE

**EVERY SATURDAY \*\*\* 8:00 AM — Men's Bible Study!** (*Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!*) JUNE 6 ... Continuing in ROMANS 9

**NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 23 @ 11:00 AM \*\*TUESDAYS: LADIES PRAYER MEETING @ 10:00am**

**Young Adults ... Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden and Rhi's home!**

**WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm, MEN'S Prayer Service // YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE**

**LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE: BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 / TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:**

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