

QUESTION: Worship

Worship is derived from an old English word which means “worthship,” signifying the worthiness of an individual to receive special honor in accordance with his/her worth. Therefore, as a Christian worship is acknowledging that God is worthy of the highest honor due to His matchless worth. In the Bible we find two principle terms (Hebrew – *saha*, Greek – *proskyneō*), which emphasize the act of prostration, the doing of obeisance or curtsy. There is no more humble nor vulnerable position that to lay prostrate. In fact, to lay in such a manner before a person shows the utmost trust. To obeisance or curtsy someone is a sign of true respect. Inserting these word pictures into the previously mentioned definition of worship brings greater clarity to the true meaning of worship. *Worship is honoring God by expressing trust and respect toward Him through acknowledging His matchless worth.*

Worship is expressed through presenting our lives to God as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). This is done both through a commitment to outer obedience and inward attitudes, which are the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in and through a persons life, holiness.

Worship is expressed in a number of ways. A life lived for the Lord is an act of worship. The most basic acts of worship in a personal and cooperate manner are the reading and exposition of Scripture, prayers, and the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as well as the observance of the sacraments. I do not believe that true worship of the individual nor corporate worship is limited by structure so long as they fall within the framework of biblical standards.

At Red Cedar Community Church we believe that God is real, relevant, and revolutionary. Therefore, we strive to communicate the gospel and worship in a way that reflects this reality. We desire for worship to be expressed from the individual to God. Since all people are different we strive for an open and honest expression of worship which is both meaningful to the individual and not distracting to others, especially those who have yet make a decision for Jesus Christ. In our “worship” services you will find people raising their hands (Psalm 28:2; 63:4), clapping their hands (Psalm 47:1), kneeling (Psalm 95:6), singing (Psalm 30:4; Col 3:16), as well as standing in quite reflection and meditation (Psalm 77:12, 119:15).

It is also noteworthy that like the worship of the early Israelites we strive to use our senses, believing that the example of the early church was in like manner. The Israelites used sight through the beauty and symbolism of the tabernacle where every color and hue had a meaning. They engaged their hearing through the use of music, the Bible records many instances of music used as worship as well as many songs. They used touch through literally touching the head of an animal to be sacrificed, symbolizing the fact that it was taking their place. They used smell through the sent of the sacrifices burning. They used taste through the feasts which were celebrations and memorials, where much of the food was symbolic. We strive to follow this example through utilizing technology such as video, a live band, and the sort and other sources such as a creative stage with backdrops, refreshments in the lobby, and many other means to engage people in a worship experience that is real, relevant, and revolutionary.

Since, worship is honoring God by expressing trust and respect toward Him through acknowledging His matchless worth, God’s church by definition is a worshipping community. The apostle Peter wrote, “...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). When the church gathers they are to do so in a worshipping attitude, which both honors God as well as signifies to those who have yet made a decision for Christ that God is real and relevant and desires to be in right relationship with them. It ought to be noted that the church has from the very beginning gathered regularly for worship and are commanded to do so (Heb 10:25).

Worship is to be expressed both personally and corporately and both are to be done in a manner which is represented by a life surrendered to the Lord and actions representative of such a life. The importance of personal and corporate worship can not be overstated. Both allow the individual as well as the “Body of Christ,” His Church, to grow in knowing God and making Him known. Or otherwise stated, both allow the individual and God’s Church to grow in their intimacy with the Lord, community with other Believer and influence on those who are yet to believe. Therefore, worship is to be central to the life of the Believer and that of the church, being expressed daily through personal time alone with God as well as regularly gathering together with fellow Believers. God’s worth is beyond comprehension. Therefore, in awe we are to offer what is due Him, from first to last, giving up our all in honoring Him by expressing trust and respect toward Him through acknowledging His matchless worth.