

What is Worship?

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There is much confusion in the church regarding worship. Hordes of people will shamelessly say things like, 'I left that church, because I did not like the worship.' Comments like this betray a lack of understanding of the true nature of worship. In Psalm 95, David said:

“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 3 For the Lord is the great God, And the great King above all gods. 4 In His hand are the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills are His also. 5 The sea is His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry land. 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. 7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: 8 Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion.”

When the Psalmist commands, “Come let us worship and bow down”, what does he mean?

It is an immensely important question when you consider that worship is perhaps the central theme of the entire Bible. It is a vast subject with fifteen Hebrew and Greek words to describe our English word – worship. Originally spelled “worth-ship”, the literal meaning of the word describes the act of ascribing worth to an object.

By this definition, worship is the most common activity of life on earth. We worship everyday and it happens anytime we express awe, joy love, submission and thankfulness toward anything.

One way to determine what we worship, is to ask, “what brings me joy?”. Or, “what captures my attention?” Or, “what do I want to shout from the housetops”?

When we speak of worship, we need to say that worship happens all day long every day... and it happens in the church. So our corporate “church meeting based” worship is simply an extension of our daily worship. If you do not worship God six days of the week, worship on the seventh, will be likely be constrained and maybe even dead.

During corporate worship services at Hope, we want to express the worth of God through various activities. These elements of worship include prayer, praise, Scripture reading, Biblical exposition, and singing. (Psalm 24, 33, 42, 95; Isa 6:1-8; Matt 4:10; John 4:24; Rom 12:1-2; Heb 13:15; Rev 4-5).

In each of our services we hope to magnify God by participating in each of these activities. All of them assist us in proclaiming our joy in the greatness and goodness of God. All of these lead us to meditation. J.I. Packer has described meditation like this:

“Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God.” J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, P18

Worship is the most common activity of everyday life. We happen to be worshipping ([i]something) at all times.

As we worship together at Hope, let it be said of us that the praise of God filled our minds, our words and our actions. We bowed down before our Maker, finding more joy in Him than all other earthly things. We sat there together amazed at His mighty Name.