

The Fellowship Digest

Edition 26, Volume 3

June

Corporate Worship

www.fellowship-pca.org

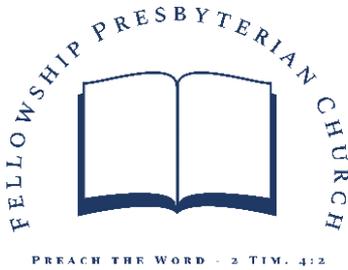


Table of Contents

June 2020

Article: <i>Preparing for Worship: A Guide</i>	3
Preaching Schedule for June	11
Announcements.....	12
The Preaching of God’s Word.....	14
Church Life: Recipes.....	22
Church Life: News.....	22
Church Life: Birthdays and Anniversaries.....	23
Prayer Needs.....	25
Hymn of the Month for June	26
Hymns for June	27
NEW Missionary Corner	28
Book Recommendation.....	30
Shepherding Visits for June	31
Article: How Should We Then Worship?.....	32

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP: A GUIDE

Rev. William F. Hill, Jr.

Introduction

On the occasion of an important event in our lives (a birthday, anniversary, etc.), we likely make plans to correctly and properly celebrate that event. We do this all the time with other more mundane things. For instance, we prepare for the next day by setting the alarm, so we do not oversleep. We may gather individual belongings and set them in a particular place so that we do not forget them. Whatever it may be, each of us engages in some form of preparation before doing anything.

If that is true, how much more, then, should we prepare for the most important activity of the week: corporate worship. Each Lord's Day, we are invited into the presence of God to worship Him. There we sing his praises, hear from him as his Word is read and preached, pray, and are refreshed at the blessing of God's presence with us, his people. Sadly, many in our day give little thought to preparing their hearts and minds to worship God. Indeed, they spend more time preparing for the mundane than they do the sacred.

In this article, I want to demonstrate the *reason* we should be diligent in preparing for worship each Lord's Day and offer some *practical advice* to help us.

Why Prepare for Worship?

For the God-fearing Christian, this is not something that needs to be explained. We should prepare for worship because we are coming to meet with the living and true God of heaven and earth. There is no more enormous privilege than to be invited into his presence. As sinful people, we have no right to be where God dwells. Yet, through the work of Christ, we have been granted access to him.

Scripture gives us some examples regarding this need to prepare to worship God. Perhaps one of the clearest expressions occurs in Leviticus 1-10. Here we have a lengthy narrative that establishes this point. Throughout those ten chapters, God commands the people to make ready their hearts and lives to enter into his presence. Though the specific ways indicated are abolished in Christ, the principle remains – to enter into God’s presence is a significant endeavor and one that should be taken seriously. So, specifically, why should we make an effort in preparation to worship the Triune God?

First, we ought to prepare for worship *because our hearts are fragile*. Scripture is quite clear that God is interested in hearts full of devotion and love for him. Yet, Scripture is equally clear that our hearts are prone to wander. Solomon wisely counsels his son to “guard [his] heart for from it flows the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23). That is, all issues of life ultimately flow from the heart of man. Jesus expands on this summary statement in Matt. 15:18-20. Here, the Savior argues that every issue of life is a heart issue. Since it is true that God is interested in hearts devoted to him (Deut. 6:4, 5; 10:12-22) and since it is true

that we are prone to wander, it is vital that we tend to the condition and nature of our hearts *before* coming into his presence on the Lord's Day.

I am reminded of the classic hymn, *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. We sometimes sing this hymn in our worship. In it, we confess the nature of our hearts to wander from the living and true God. We sing, "Prone to wander – Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love." None of us desires to wander, but the fact remains – though we are new creatures, we still wrestle with the sinfulness of our own lives and the indwelling sin that resides in us. This fact, emanating from our hearts, is reason enough to prepare to worship God. However, it is not the only reason.

The second reason we ought to prepare to worship God on the Lord's Day is ***due to the majesty and holiness of God***. Each of us has witnessed the beauty of a wedding ceremony. What we rarely see is the amount of preparation that occurs before the service, especially as the bride makes herself ready for her husband. Meticulous effort is made to ensure every hair is in place; the makeup perfect; the dress spotless. No detail is ignored. Every issue is handled so that the ceremony is flawless. The reason for this careful attention to detail is the focus and object of the gathering. That focus and object require careful preparation.

As in the illustration of a wedding, our focus is much greater. We do not gather to meet with a man, or to hear from a man, or to witness what men do or don't do. We gather to meet with the living and true God. Scripture is clear as to the nature and character of this God, thus demanding that we approach him with preparation of the heart and carefulness of behavior. The Scriptures declare that our God is majestic (Ps. 29). It further tells us that he is

holy (Isa. 6). It tells us that he is worthy of our praise and adoration and love and affection (Psa. 135; 150). It tells us that we should sing his praise (Ex. 15, Deut. 36; Psa. 149) for all that he Has done for us. Because of who God is, we should approach him with fear and reverence and awe. How can we do that if we have not made ready our lives – in exacting detail – to meet with so perfect and glorious a God?

I suspect that one of the reasons people say that they do not “get anything from worship” is because they forget who they are worshipping. There seems to be a loss of the awesomeness of God as we gather to worship him. Too often, there is a casualness that runs through the entirety of his worship. Yet, Scripture never presents God’s people approaching him in that manner. This casualness emanates from unprepared hearts and ends with the statement, “I didn’t get anything from worship today.” Perhaps the solution for our loss of awe in worship is to prepare to meet with our majestic and holy God on the Lord’s Day.

Therefore, I offer you the following as a means in which you may make yourself ready to meet with the living and true God.

What Can We Do to Prepare for Worship?

The following items are not inspired, obviously. They are born out of years of experience and observation. They are not to be followed woodenly, but with thought and intention of the heart to be ready to meet with our God.

1. ***Preparing for worship means using the entire week with worship as the goal.*** Engage in the daily discipline of family worship. Husbands, lead your wife in a reading of Scripture and pray together daily. As you engage in this discipline, you will make ready the soil of your heart for the worship of God. There are many resources available on this subject (if you need help, ask your pastor). It can be as simple as reading a chapter from God's Word and discussing it and then entering into a time of prayer. You can also utilize the monthly newsletter of the church and follow the discussion questions offered for each sermon. For those of you who are single, the advice is the same. If you are not spending time in the Word throughout the week, corporate worship will seem strange to you.
2. ***Preparing for worship begins on Saturday evening.*** Three things come to mind here: First, a tired mind and body will not focus well in corporate worship. We are to worship him with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. A tired body will result in sluggish thinking as you labor to worship. If you stay up all night, you will not be prepared. Endeavor to get the proper rest on Saturday evening. Second, use Saturday evening to pray for the worship service. Pray that God would be pleased with the worship. Pray that Spirit of God would help us and cause us to worship him in spirit and truth. Pray that the preaching would be a demonstration of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:1-5), and exalt Christ. Pray that God would bless his

people as they gather to worship him. Third, plan ahead of time. Do you have gas in the car? Food in the refrigerator? Clothes ironed and ready to wear? Is everything in order so you can focus on the primary duty of the day?

3. ***Preparing for worship means cultivating a spirit of joy regarding the Lord's Day.*** Remember, you are not going to a funeral. You are going to worship the majestic God of heaven and earth! It should be a delight. One author puts it this way: "Cultivate a spirit of joy on Sunday mornings in your home. If this is the highlight of our week, then let's act like it. Talk about how wonderful the day is going to be, wake the kids up with excitement, turn on good Christian music for the whole family to listen to, and put a smile on your face."¹

4. ***Preparing for worship means eliminating certain behaviors on the Lord's Day morning.*** Avoid distracting items that might turn your mind to things that are not conducive to focusing your mind and soul for God's worship. Turn off the TV, and listen to good music that will edify and encourage you as you come to worship. Avoid social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). That is going to look different for most people, but discipline your mind and behavior

¹ Jason Helopoulos, "Preparing for Sunday Worship," *The Gospel Coalition*, n.d., accessed June 5, 2020, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/preparing-for-sunday-worship/>.

to focus on the purpose of the day: God's worship.

5. ***Preparing for worship means thinking about the sermon text that will be preached.*** One of the advantages of preaching through books of the Bible is that the congregation is rarely ignorant of the next sermon text. Spend some time on the Lord's Day morning reading and thinking (perhaps discussing as well) the sermon that you will hear in a few hours. Give yourself enough time Sunday morning to utilize this discipline. We should be reading the Word of God anyhow, so substitute your regular reading for a reading of the text of Scripture that will be preached.

6. ***Preparing for worship means examining your own heart and mind.*** If there are sins to deal with, deal with them. Repent and look to Christ. Don't wait for the corporate confession of sin to blanket your personal sin. Pray as David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me" (Psa., 51:10). If there are offenses that need to be resolved, purpose to resolve them. That is especially true on the week when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

7. ***Preparing for worship means arriving early to worship.*** Nothing is more distracting to your mind and soul, as well as that of others when you are forced to rush into the church building, sit down, just as the pastor is reading the call to worship. Purpose to arrive early enough to sit still, meditate,

and pray for what you are about to do: worship the living and true God. When you enter the sanctuary, refrain from conversation with other members. There is time for that after the worship service.

None of these items should be a checklist. Evaluate them honestly before the Lord. Each of us should strive to be prepared to meet our God and Savior on the day that he has provided. I pray that these items will assist you in the joyful duty of worshipping the majestic, awesome, holy, loving, kind, and good God that we serve.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the market day of the soul is the Lord's Day. The privileges afforded to the people of God on this day of worship are many. It is due to a gracious God that he calls us into his presence to worship him. Let us be diligent in preparing for this most important appointment in our week.



~Preaching Schedule for June 2020~

June 7	AM: Romans 12:9 PM: Judges 3:12-31
June 14	AM: Romans 12:10-13 PM: Judges 4:1-24
June 21	AM: Romans 12:14-16 PM: Judges 5:1-31
June 28	AM: Romans 12:17 PM: Judges 6:1-10





~Announcements~

- **Reminder:** The Session is asking that all members attend all stated meetings of the church unless providentially hindered.
- The **pulpit ministry of Fellowship** is on **SermonAudio**. You can access the sermons preached by our pastor on the Fellowship website at www.fellowship-pca.org or go to <http://www.sermonaudio.com/fellowship-pca>

- **The bulletins** for the services of the church are now available on the church website.
- The pastor can be heard **on the radio** each **Tuesday from 10-10:30 AM on WLIK**. You can listen locally at **97.9 FM, 1270 AM** or **stream** it over the internet at www.wlik.net.
- **The church library is now open. Please take a look!**
- Please secure your copy of the **June prayer calendar**. It is available on the table in the hallway.
- **We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper** on July 5, 2020, in the AM worship service.

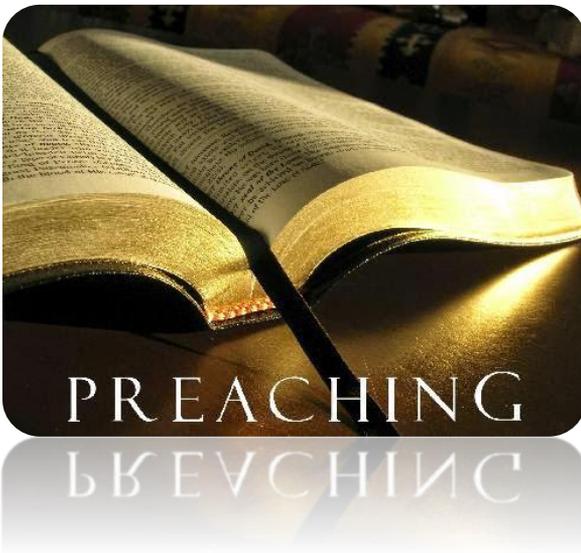


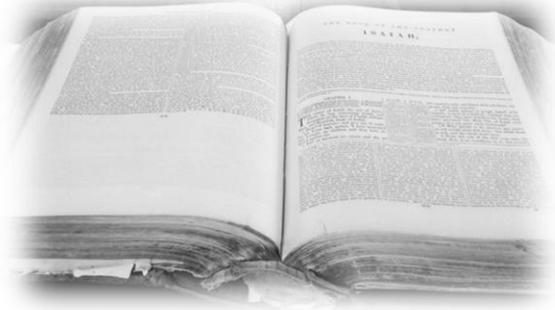
~The Preaching of the Word of God~

Westminster Larger Catechism – Q160

Q. 160. What is required of those that hear the word preached?

A. It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with **diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine** what they hear by the Scriptures; **receive the truth** with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind as the Word of God; **meditate, and confer** of it; **hide** it in their hearts, and bring forth the **fruit** of it in their lives.





Note: Each month, to help us prepare for worship and the preaching of God's Word, the pastor will be offering a summary of the upcoming sermons. These will include discussion questions that can be used for family or personal worship.

~June 7 – AM Worship~

Sermon Text: Romans 12:9

Main Point: The apostle Paul exhorts Christians on the subject of love as the highest expression and characteristic of the Christian life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is true, biblical love? Read 1 Cor. 13.
2. Why is it important that love be without hypocrisy?
3. How should you define that which is “evil?”

~June 7 – PM Worship~

Sermon Text: Judges 3:12-31

Main Point: The people of God are rescued from

their evil ways due to the work of a left-handed man, from the tribe of Benjamin.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the occasion of this narrative?
2. Who did God use to deal with his wayward people?
3. What is the response of the people after their enemies attack them?
4. What was the “message of God” offered by Ehud? See 3:20.
5. What does it mean that the land had rest?
6. Who succeeded Ehud?

~June 14 – AM Worship~

Sermon Text: Romans 12:10-13

Main Point: Paul urges his readers to express love in concrete ways.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to love one another with “brotherly affection?”
2. In what tangible ways are you able to “outdo one another in showing honor?”
3. What “hope” should cause you to rejoice?
Note: remember the context is that of love.
4. Why should you be patient in tribulation?
Again, remember the context.
5. How are you able to contribute to the needs of the saints? Is Paul only speaking about money, or is it more than that?

6. Why do you need to be “constant in prayer?”

~June 14 – PM Worship~

Sermon Text: Judges 4:1-24

Main Point: God uses a woman to rescue his people.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the occasion of this narrative?
2. What is the occupation of Deborah?
3. Who is Barak? What is his failure?
4. Recount the events that led to the rescues of God’s people.

~June 21 – AM Worship~

Sermon Text: Romans 12:14-16

Main Point: Paul exhorts his readers on the subject of personal interaction within the church and the world.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the qualifier in this exhortation?
2. Why shouldn’t a Christian repay evil for evil? Relate your answer to God’s treatment towards you.

~June 21– PM Worship~

Sermon Text: Judges 5:1-31

Main Point: The LORD allows enemies to remain in the land to teach his people.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is chapter five a song? Compare this song with the events of chapter four. Read, also, Ex. 15.
2. What lesson are we taught regarding worship with the songs that are recorded and sung in the Bible?

~June 28 – AM Worship~

Sermon Text: Romans 12:17

Main Point: Paul gives further instruction regarding life in the church and the world in the area of keeping the peace.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the qualifier in 12:18 as it relates to keeping peace with others?
2. What should you not avenge yourself?
3. What should your response be towards your enemies?

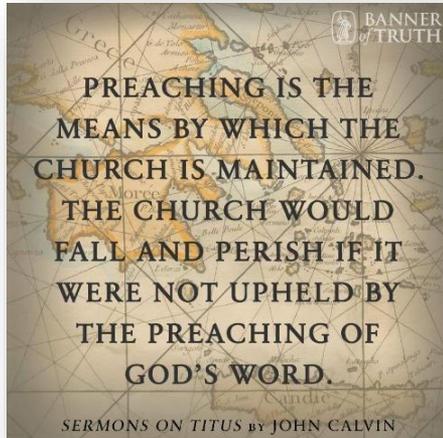
~June 28 – PM Worship~

Sermon Text: Judges 6:1-10

Main Point: God's people again fail to honor the LORD and commit wicked acts before him.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is used to oppress the people of God?
2. What did they do to inflict hard against them?
3. How did the people of God respond?
4. How does God answer them?





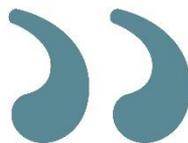
At **Fellowship Presbyterian Church**, we believe that the **preached Word** is central to our worship. It is to be attended to

with diligence and care. The Word of God preached is the living and active voice of the Lord Jesus Christ to His people.



Q. 88. *What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communiceth to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communiceth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the **word, sacraments, and prayer**; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.
(*Westminster Shorter Catechism*)





Services

Wednesday

6 PM Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

Current Study: *One Lord, One Plan, One People: A Survey of the Bible: The book of Numbers.*

Lord's Day

~~9:45 AM Sunday School - Currently Suspended~~

11 AM Worship

Series: Romans 12-14

5 PM Worship

Series: The Book of Judges

~~6 PM @ Wellington Manner [2nd Sun. of the month] -
Currently suspended~~

~~2 PM [Final Sun. of the month] - Currently suspended~~

~Church Life~

~Recipes~

Do **you** have a recipe to share with the congregation?
PLEASE HELP our church family with a recipe or two
to share in the newsletter.

Send it to wfill@fellowship-pca.org

~Church & Community



- **Wednesday Bible Study – “One Lord, One Plan, One People: A Survey of the Bible” – Everyone is invited to this study!** Currently, we are examining the book of **Numbers**.
- Starting with the **JULY** Edition of the *Digest* will include **book reviews**. Some of them will be on books in our church library.
- **The pastor is seeking members** who would be willing to write a brief bio to be included in the *Fellowship Digest*.

~Church Life~

~Birthdays and Anniversaries~

Birthdays

June 5 – June Dufour

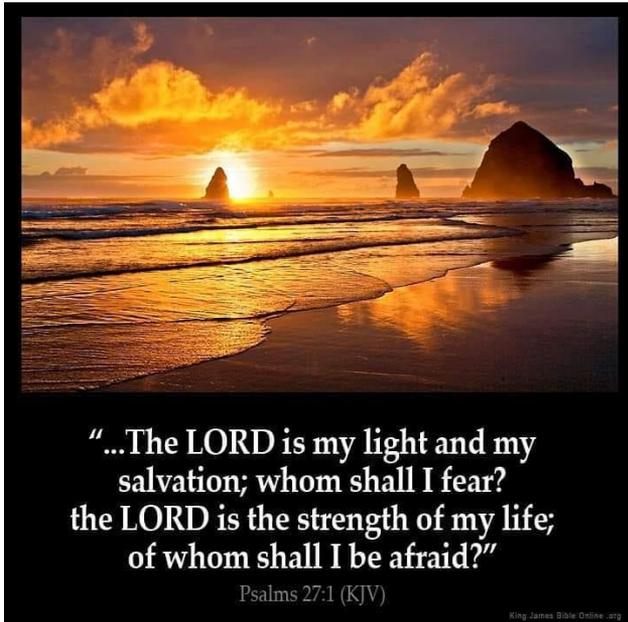
June 9 – Rob Amick

June 16 – Zachery Amick

Anniversaries

June 2 – Tom and June Dufour

June 7 – John and Barbara Slaven



"The Pastor's Study"

The radio ministry of Fellowship Presbyterian Church

Every Tuesday from 10-10:30 AM



Live stream on www.wlik.net

97.9 FM | 1270 AM

Fellowship Presbyterian Church

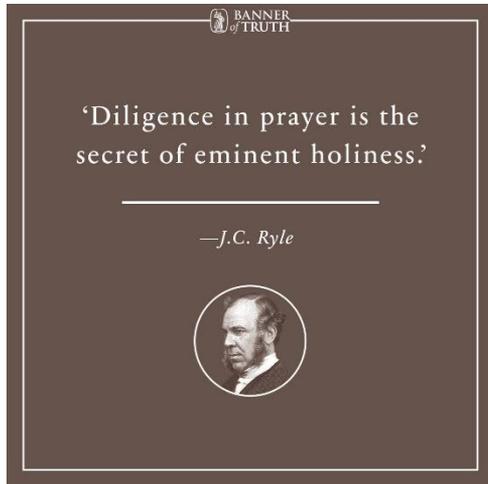
www.fellowship-pca.org

Tune in each Tuesday!
10 AM

~Prayer~

If you have any prayer needs that you would like included in the newsletter, please let one of the elders or the pastor know.

Please submit them by June 27, 2020, by 5 PM to be included in the February *Fellowship Digest*.



- Pray for the **preaching** of God's Word.
- Pray for **growth**, spiritually, and numerically.
- Pray that FPC would be useful **salt and light** in the community to the glory of God, our Father.
- Pray for the **elders** of the church: protection from Satan's attacks, wisdom, and godliness.
- Pray for the **deacon and elder candidates and their training**.
- Pray for those in our number who are suffering physically. **NOTE:** A phone call, a card, a note to them to encourage them is strongly recommended.

~Hymn of the Month~

From out of the Depths I Cry, O Lord, to Thee

Trinity Hymnal #552

Based on Psalm 130

This hymn will be used in worship throughout **June**.

1 From out the depths I cry, O Lord, to you;
Lord, hear my call.

I love you, Lord, for you will hear my plea,
forgiving all.

If you should mark our sins, who then could stand?
But grace and mercy dwell at your right hand.

2 I wait for God, the Lord, and on his word
my hope relies;
my soul still waits and looks unto the Lord
till light arise.

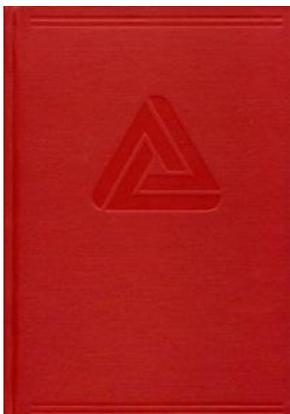
I look for him to drive away my night,
yes, more than watchmen look for morning light.

3 Hope in the Lord, you waiting saints, and he
will well provide,
for mercy and redemption full and free
with him abide.

From sin and evil, mighty though they seem,
his arm almighty will his saints redeem.



~Hymns for June 2020~



Note: These hymns will be used in worship throughout **June**. Please review them. You are encouraged to ask the pastor for a **free *Trinity Hymnal*** for your personal use at home and in family worship.

Hymn of the month: #522

June 7

AM Worship: #100, #552, #644

PM Worship: #5, #693, #92

June 14

AM Worship: #1, #552, #252

PM Worship: #32, #460, #53

June 21

AM Worship: #30, #552, #359

PM Worship: #55, #499, #580

June 28

AM Worship: #38, #552, #355

PM Worship: #1, #32, #6

~Missionary Corner ~

This is a **new** feature in the *Fellowship Digest*.

~Matt Lamos | Belgium ~

Dear Praying Friends,

We are well here in Ghent, Belgium. We've persevered through the Corona shutdown, and on Sunday the 14th of June, we will be able to hold services in person again. This is a cause for great rejoicing!

We have been doing two services on a Sunday via Skype during this period of time. You can pray for us as we will begin the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and will start planning the baptism of the core family's youngest child. (His name is Kwinten because he is the 5th one!).

We have contacted a Christian organization that helps churches set up non-profit organizations to have them review the documents that we have drawn up and make sure that they are in order. Please pray for this. It would be helpful to have our non-profit set up within the next few weeks to a month.

We have had one new person express interest in the church. Please pray about this.

Please pray for me as I follow up with an evangelism contact in one of the next towns over.

Please pray for me for spiritual strength to remain close to the Lord, to do good sermon preparation each week, and simply to be a faithful pastor. I am preaching through Philippians in the morning and doing a series

called “What is a Christian?” in the afternoons. In addition, we have just finished consecutive reading in the book of Esther in the the AM service and will now start up in 1 Samuel. We are reading through Luke in the afternoon service.

Thank you for your prayers!

Love in Christ from Belgium.

~Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary | Taylors, SC ~

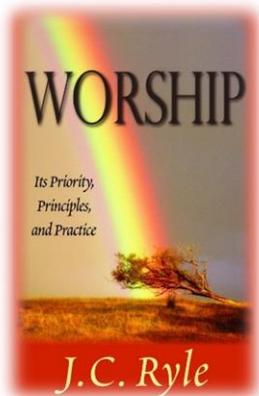
- Praise and thanksgiving for the generosity of God’s people as we end our fiscal year (June 30, 2020).
- Prayer for Dr. Jonathan Master and Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. as the latter hands off the Presidency to the former.
- Right now is “prime time” for our Admissions Department. We are anticipating at least 20 new students for the fall, most of whom are distance students (due to the pandemic). Please pray for more resident students.



BANNER
of TRUTH

YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ

~Book Recommendation ~



Worship: Its priority, principals, and practice

BOOK DESCRIPTION

Why is it important for men and women to worship God? Does the Bible provide principles that can guide Christians in their worship of God? What are the key elements in wholesome, balanced, church worship? Is there anything Christians should avoid in their worship services? Can we be sure that God is pleased with the worship we offer him?

These questions are taken up and answered in *Worship: Its Priority, Principles, and Practice*, J C Ryle's spiritual, insightful, and practical study into the Bible's teaching on this subject. In an age when there is so much confusion and controversy surrounding Christian worship, Ryle provides sincere Christians with guiding principles that are sure to lead to joyful, Spirit-filled, Christ-centred, and God-honouring worship. [Taken from the Banner of Truth website]

~Shepherding Visits for June ~



Dufour
Hill, Sr.
Jones-Curtis

~Article~

How Should We Then Worship?

Dr. R.C. Sproul

Three-quarters of the way through the twentieth century, Francis A. Schaeffer asked the question, “How should we then live?” His book of the same name answered the questions raised by the radical shift in our culture from modernity to post-modernity.

The question that we face in our generation is closely related to it: “How should we then worship?” The “how?” of worship is a hotly disputed matter in our day. The issue has been described as the war of worship. If there has been a worship war in the church in America in the last thirty years, then surely by now its outcome has been decided. Far and away, the victorious mode of worship in our day is that form roughly described as contemporary worship. “Contemporary” in this context is contrasted with “traditional,” which is seen as being outmoded, passé, and irrelevant to contemporary individuals. Those who deem the contemporary shift in worship as a deterioration are in the minority, so it behooves us to explore the “how” question that Schaeffer first raised.

The “how” question is related to the other questions usually pursued by the journalists who seek to unwrap the details of a particular story. They ask the questions: “Who, what, where, when, and how?” In like manner, the best place for us to answer the “how” question of worship is to begin with

the “who” question. Manifestly the most important question we ask is, “Who is it that we are called upon to worship with our hearts, our minds, and our souls?” The answer to that question at first glance is exceedingly easy. From a Christian perspective, the obvious reply is that we are called upon to worship the triune God. As easy as this answer is on the surface, when we see the concern given to this question throughout the Old and New Testaments, we realize that as fallen creatures it is one of our most basic and fundamental inclinations to worship something, or someone, other than the true God. It’s not by accident that the first four commandments of the Ten Commandments focus attention on the true God whom we are to worship according to His Being. The New Testament likewise calls us to honor God with true worship. Paul reminds us that at the heart of our fallenness is a refusal to honor God as God or to show proper gratitude to Him with praise and thanksgiving. So it is imperative that the Christian, at the beginning of his pursuit to understand what true worship is, gets it clear that the object of our worship is to be God and God alone.

When we move to the “where” question, it doesn’t appear to matter that much. We recall Jesus’ discussion with the woman at the well when He said that the New Testament church has no appointed central sanctuary where all true worship must take place. It’s not necessary for Christians to migrate to Jerusalem in order to offer authentic worship to God. Yet at the same time we notice throughout biblical history that people met together in a

variety of locations, including house churches in the early years after Christ's ascension. The house church phenomenon of the first century was not something intended to avoid institutional churches or to seek an underground church as such, but it was basically built on the foundation of convenience because the church was so small that the number of believers could easily meet in a home. As the church grew in number, it became necessary to find a place where a larger group could assemble for the solemn worship of God, as an act of corporate praise and celebration. So today it would seem that the obvious answer to the "where" question is that we should be worshiping together with other Christians as we gather in local churches.

The "when?" is also a question that is given attention biblically. Obviously, it is the obligation of the believer to worship God everyday, at all times. But God appoints special times and seasons for the gathering of His people in corporate worship. In the Old Testament, that special time was established early to be on the Sabbath. The term sabbath means seventh, or a cycle of one in seven. In the Old Testament economy, it was on the seventh day of the week. After the resurrection and the split of the Christian community from Judaism, it was changed from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week, though the seven-day cycle remained intact. We understand that when the Christian community meets in solemn assembly, the communion of saints means that not only are Christians joined together locally in their own

particular congregations, but that the worship of God goes beyond the walls of each individual church and incorporates churches around the nation and around the world, who, for the most part, are meeting at the same time. But the “where” and the “when” questions pale into insignificance when we return our attention to the “how” question. And the “how” question is ultimately determined by the “who” question.

We are to worship God how God wants us to worship Him. This is the apparent crisis in the revolution of worship in our day. The driving force behind the radical shift in how we worship God today is not because of a new discovery of the character of God but rather through pragmatic studies on what works to attract people to corporate worship. Thus, we devise new ways of worship that will accommodate the worship of the people of God to those who are outside the covenant community. We are told that churches ought to be seeker-sensitive, that is, they ought to design worship to be appealing to people who are unbelievers. That may be a wonderful strategy for evangelism, but we must remember that the purpose of Sabbath worship is not primarily evangelism. Worship and evangelism are not the same thing. The solemn assembly is to be the assembling together of believers, of the body of Christ, to ascribe worship and honor and praise to their God and to their Redeemer. And the worship must not be designed to please the unbeliever or the believer. Worship should be designed to please God. We remember the tragic circumstances of the sons of Aaron in the Old Testament, who offered

strange fire before the Lord, which God had not commanded. As a result of their “experiment” in worship, God devoured them instantly. In protest, Aaron went to Moses inquiring about God’s furious reaction. Moses reminded Aaron that God had said that He must be regarded as holy by all who approach Him.

I believe that the one attribute of God that should inform our thinking about worship more than any other is His holiness. This is what defines His character and should be manifested in how we respond to Him. To be sure, God is both transcendent and imminent. He is not merely remote and aloof and apart from us. He also comes to join us. He abides with us. He enters into fellowship. He brings us into His family. We invoke His presence. But when we are encouraged to draw near to Him in New Testament worship, we are encouraged to draw near to a God who, even in His imminence, is altogether holy.

The modern movement of worship is designed to break down barriers between man and God, to remove the veil, as it were, from the fearsome holiness of God, which might cause us to tremble. It is designed to make us feel comfortable. The music we import into the church is music that we draw from the world of entertainment in the secular arena. I heard one theologian say recently that he was not only pleased with this innovative style of worship and music but thought that what the church needs today is music that is even more “funky.” When we hear clergy and theologians encourage the church to be more funky in worship, I fear that the church has lost its identity. Rather,

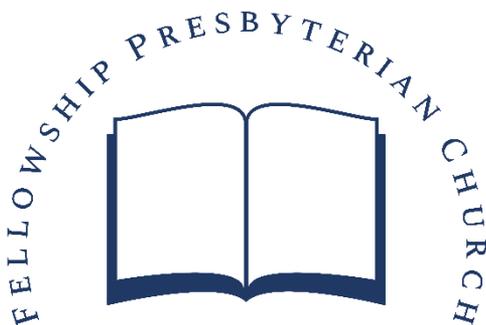
let us return to Augustine who agreed that we can use a variety of music in our worship, but all that is done should be done with a certain gravitas, a certain solemnity, always containing the attributes of reverence and awe before the living God. The “what?” of worship, the “where?” of worship, the “when?” of worship, and especially the “how?” of worship must always be determined by the character of the One Who is the living God.

This article used with permission from Ligonier Ministries. The original article can be found here:

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/how-should-we-then-worship/>

~Notes~

~Notes~



PREACH THE WORD - 2 TIM. 4:2

The Fellowship Digest is a publication of
Fellowship Presbyterian Church
2331 Early Rd., Newport TN 37821
Phone: (423) 623-8652

www.fellowship-pca.org

Session

Terry Rowekamp (Clerk), Rev. William Hill
(moderator)

Diaconate

William F. Hill, Sr. (treasurer)