

# WORSHIP

## **Who should worship God?**

Everyone! All living creatures were made by God and receive their life from Him, and all owe Him their worship (Psalm 150:6). Worship is a universal duty.

Of course, Christians have even more reason than others to worship the Lord (Psalm 107:1-3). Christians have greater knowledge of who God is and what He has done. We have not only been created by God, but redeemed by Him as well. He has given us not only life on earth, but eternal life in heaven as well. Therefore, we of all people ought to worship God.

One day all creatures will bow before the Lord and acknowledge His rule (Philippians 2:9-11). Even now, worship goes on continually in heaven (Revelation 4:8). But on earth God is not now worshipped by everyone. This makes our worship here and now of particular value to the Lord, for it takes place in a hostile environment. Thus we now we have a special opportunity to offer unto God a worship that is more precious because it is not universal.

## **When should we worship God?**

Always! Worship is always appropriate, at any time day or night (Psalm 34:1; Philippians 4:4).

Worship should be an everyday occurrence, not just a Sunday-only affair. Worship begins in our own private prayer time, when we come aside from the cares and duties of life to meet with our Father. It is there that we set the tone for the day, and for our lives. A daily time of devotion leads to a life of praise and worship.

Remember: worship doesn't depend upon the circumstances. We are to praise God not only when things are going well, but also when they are not (Habakkuk 3:17-18). Our circumstances may change, but God never does, and He is always worthy of our worship.

Similarly, worship doesn't depend upon our feelings. Worship is not something we do only when we feel like it. God doesn't change with our feelings, and neither should our worship. In fact, worship can be therapeutic; when we choose to offer the sacrifice of praise in spite of how we feel (Hebrews 13:15), we often find our feelings changing for the better.

### **Where should we worship God?**

Everywhere! Worship isn't just something that goes on inside a church building. Worship is a way of life, an attitude of praise that we carry with us wherever we go. Worship flows from our hearts at home, at work, driving in the car, shopping in the mall, anywhere. The whole world is God's sanctuary!

Having said this, we must nevertheless recognize that there is something special about gathering together with God's people for corporate worship. From the time of the ancient Israelites in the Old Testament, to the days of the early church in the New Testament, and throughout the centuries that followed, the people of God have made it a habit to meet regularly to worship Him together. This should be our practice as well (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Individual worship is good, but corporate worship is better still. God's purpose is to make of believers a temple in which He can dwell (Ephesians 2:19-22). Thus, when we join together in worship, the presence of the Lord can be known and felt in a special way. Alone we are just single stones; together we form a holy temple which can contain a greater measure of the glory of God.

The Lord takes special delight to see the hearts of His people united in worship, and to hear their voices joined in exclaiming His praise. And we ourselves can find a foretaste of heaven when we come together with our brothers and sisters in Christ to rejoice in God, to tell and sing of what He has done for us. Worship is celebration! And when it comes to a celebration, the more the merrier!

## **Why should we worship God?**

(1) God commands us to worship Him (Psalm 150). Worship is a matter of obedience.

(2) God is worthy of our worship (Revelation 4:11). He is to be praised for what He has done, His marvelous works of creation and redemption. And He is to be praised for who He is, Creator and Sovereign of the universe, and Savior of His people.

(3) Worship has profound and beneficial effects on us:

- In worship we draw near to God and find a deeper sense of His presence (Psalm 100:4).
- Through worship we come to see God more clearly, and gain a better understanding of who He is (Psalm 48:1).
- As we worship God, our own problems fade into the background, and our perspective becomes clearer (Acts 4:23-31).
- Praising God strengthens our faith, as we focus on His greatness (Psalm 56:10-11).
- Praise brings freedom, as we look at God rather than ourselves, and let go of the things that bind us (Psalm 34:1-4).
- The Holy Spirit fills us when we praise and glorify God (Ephesians 5:18-20).
- As we focus on Christ in praise and worship, the Holy Spirit works to transform us into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18).

## **How should we worship God?**

By all possible means! We can praise the Lord in song and in dance, in drama and in music, through laughing and crying, shouting and praying, standing and kneeling (Psalm 150:3-5). We should devote our best energies to finding creative ways to express our love and worship to the Lord.

The way we choose to worship at a given time will depend upon where we are, our own particular tastes and talents, and what is on our heart. We may even worship the Lord in total silence, bowing before Him in quiet and reverent humility (Psalm 46:10).

According to Jesus, the important thing is that we worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). What does this mean?

## I. WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT

This means first of all that worship is a matter of the heart. The inward reality is much more important than the manner of the outward expression. No matter how loudly or skillfully we sing, play or dance, it is all for naught if our hearts are not in it. True worship originates deep within our spirit, and then comes forth in words and actions.

But to worship God in spirit also means to let our worship be directed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is to be our Guide in all things (John 16:13), and this includes worship. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26), and since the goal of His ministry is to exalt and glorify Christ, He is ready and willing to inspire and direct our worship.

On an individual level, the Holy Spirit first reveals within our hearts the reality of who God is and what He has done for us (1 Corinthians 2:9-10), thus calling forth praise and thanksgiving in response. Then the Spirit helps to give expression to the praise in our hearts. He may lead us to shout, to sing, to laugh, to cry or to dance. He may also give us words in an unknown tongue with which to praise God, words that go beyond the limits of our understanding in uttering what is in our hearts.

On a corporate level, the goal of Pentecostal worship is to allow the Holy Spirit to direct the praise of the whole congregation. We can think of the congregation as an orchestra, with the individual members as the musicians. The Holy Spirit inspires each musician to play a melody of praise, at the same time orchestrating the individual strains into a unified

symphony of praise to God. When we allow the Holy Spirit to conduct our worship, the result is a beautiful harmony that gives a foretaste of celestial worship itself.

Pentecostal worshippers are not passive spectators, but active participants. Pentecostal worship leaders seek the input of the Holy Spirit in everything from song selection to order of service to receiving the offering. They allow room for individuals to contribute to the service in song, prophecy, testimony, or giving and interpreting messages in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:26). At the same time, individuals must submit to the leadership who are responsible for maintaining an orderly flow in the service (1 Corinthians 14:32-33, 40). There must be a balance between freedom and order, for everything is to be done for the good of the church and the glory of God (1 Corinthians 14:26).

## II. WORSHIP GOD IN TRUTH

This means first of all that our worship must be sincere, without hypocrisy. What comes forth from our lips should match what is in our hearts. We must open our hearts to God, not concealing anything or pretending to be something we are not, but coming to Him just as we are.

To worship God in truth also means to worship Him as He has revealed Himself in the Bible. We must worship God in knowledge of who He truly is, not in some false idea of Him that comes from our own imagination.

Finally, to worship God in truth means to come to Him through Jesus Christ, who is the truth and the only way to God (John 14:6). We have access to God only through Christ. Our prayers, our songs, our offerings, our praise -- everything we present to God -- must be offered in the name of Christ.

### **What is worship?**

We can think of worship as a three-step process:

(1) Worship begins in recognition of who God is and what He has done for us, when our eyes are opened to see the truth about Him.

(2) This revelation brings forth a response of thanksgiving and praise, as we begin to glorify God for His greatness and goodness to us.

(3) Worship culminates in consecration, as we offer unto God not only our praise but also our very selves. The worship that begins in our hearts is not complete until we go on to offer our whole lives unto God as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2).

Our lives are to be given unto God for Him to transform and use for His purposes. God wants the worship we express in the sanctuary to spill over until it floods all areas of our lives, so that everything we are and everything we do becomes an offering of praise to Him (Colossians 3:17). For God's people, worship is a way of life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Read Psalm 100.**

1. According to the psalmist, who should worship the Lord?
2. How should we come into the presence of the Lord (v.4)?
3. What kind of attitude should characterize our worship (vv.2-3)?
4. What are some ways to express our praise (vv.1-2)?
5. Why should we worship the Lord (v.3, v.5)?