



Prayer Resources

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Worshipping In Truth

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. John 4:23

Jesus told the Samaritan woman who was struggling with the contrast of Jewish worship and Samaritan worship, that His Father was seeking worshipers who would worship Him with the right heart attitude (*in spirit*) and within the confines of the written law (*in truth*). While much could be said regarding worshipping with the right heart attitude, we would like presently to address worshipping within the confines of Scriptural guidelines. The Bible teaches that within the life of every believer should be a balance of personal, family, and corporate worship. Grievously today's worshipers are negligent of the first two spheres and grossly maladjusted in the third. A.W. Tozer has observed: "To great sections of the church, the art of worship has been lost entirely, and in its place has come that strange and foreign thing called the 'program.' This word has been borrowed from the stage and applied with sad wisdom to the type of public service which now passes for worship among us." God's 'program' for corporate worship should include a balance of four distinct and indispensable elements.

Singing is an indispensable element of Biblical worship (Psalm 100:2; Isaiah 51:11; Colossians 3:16). Paul states in Ephesians 5:19, *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*. How rich and full that sounds! Oh the depth of the Psalms! The doctrines of the hymns! The delight of spiritual songs! Balanced hymnology is derived from sound theology and produces rich doxology (see Philippians 2:5-11; Ephesians 3:14-21). Many of today's churches are lopsided musically—choosing to sing only one kind of music! Some churches have swung from empty lethargic singing to emotional self-entertaining praise that lacks both musical and Biblical credibility.

Scripture reading is an indispensable element of Biblical worship (Nehemiah 8:8; Acts 13:15). Paul strongly admonishes Timothy to utilize Scripture reading as a vital part of worship. He says in 1 Timothy 4:13, *give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*. Jesus employed Scripture reading when He gave his Messianic declaration in the synagogue of Nazareth in Luke 4:16. Today's typical order of service in the local church omits Scripture reading altogether! At times, the pastor will read his sermon text, but often it is only a few verses in length. The Jews of Jesus' day would have a balanced reading from the Law and the prophets. Today's reading is more from the attendance records and the profits!

Exposition of the Scriptures is an indispensable element of Biblical worship (Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:2). In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul also encourages Christians to give attention to *exhortation and doctrine*. There is no substitute for the exposition of the Scriptures! According to 2 Timothy 2:15, careful attention to *rightly dividing* the Word of God in a balanced approach to preaching will produce workman that meet God's approval. Much of today's

sermon preaching is a far cry from Biblical exposition.

Prayer is an indispensable element of Biblical worship (Acts 2:42; Luke 18:10; Luke 24:53). The sum and substance of the Jewish corporate worship experience consisted of prayer. Their emphasis was reflected in their prayer shawl (*tallit*), their prayer book (*siddur*), their Sabbath prayer gatherings (*ma'amadot*), their almsgiving (*tzedakah*), and their eighteen blessings (*Shemoneh Esrei*) during the worship service. The three worship services were established in the days of Ezra and are based on the praying of Abraham (Gen-

esis 19:27), of Isaac (Genesis 24:63) and of Jacob (Genesis 28:10). Today's worship services in our churches are almost devoid of genuine prayer. The call to worship and the pastoral prayer have been in most cases omitted, leaving only the offertory prayer and the benediction as the sole opportunities for prayer.

We are convinced that the spiritual health of today's church is dependent upon worshipping the Lord in spirit and in truth. Would you join with us in praying that pastors and church leaders will restore proper Scriptural balance of each of these indispensable aspects of worship to the corporate worship services?