

Into the World: Becoming the Presence of Christ in our Community

When Believers Gathers for Worship

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT?

Main Idea: When we gather for worship we do three things: we celebrate, we participate, and we prepare.

1. HE EXPECTS CELEBRATION – When you come...come ready to celebrate the privilege of fellowship with God. *2 Chronicles 3:1—7:11*

- A. We see this principle in the greatest worship event in the O.T.: dedication of the temple. 3:1-6:11
 - 1. There were two worship places in the O.T.: the tabernacle and the temple.
 - 2. Both were designed so that sinful people could enjoy fellowship with a holy God.
 - 3. By Solomon's day the tabernacle hadn't been used for over 400 years.
 - 4. David plans to build the temple. Solomon spends seven years overseeing construction.
- B. When dedication day comes the people celebrate the presence of God. 7:1-7
 - 1. Everyone is prepared: people, priests, singers and leaders. 5:1-14; 7:4-7
 - 2. Solomon prays. 6:12-42
 - 3. The fire falls. The glory fills. Worship is interrupted. 7:1-2 (See also 5:11-14.)
 - 4. The people rejoice. 7:3
- C. Four questions about the story:
 - 1. What is the major lesson taught by this? (God delights to reveal himself when we seek him in corporate worship.)
 - 2. Does God always reveal himself in the same way? No! (You can't put God in a box. He comes as he will.)
 - 3. How did they balance preparation and spontaneity? (They give space for God's interruption.)
 - 4. So, why is it so important that we gather corporately? (It glorifies God; it's good for us. Illus: super bowl of one.)

2. HE EXPECTS PARTICIPATION – When you come...come ready to do things that heighten your sense of his presence. *Scripture 1:1*

- A. The heart of Biblical worship has always been participation.
 - 1. The essential command is Psalm 34:8 – “*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*”
 - 2. In the O.T. God gave Israel a system of sacrifices. Example: sacrificing a bull.
 - 3. In the N.T. God also gives s system of sacrifices. ***But we are free to be creative.***
- B. In the past 2,000 years Christians have applied freedom in worship very differently.
 - 1. “Preliterate”: From 300 A.D. to 1500 the church primarily used images.
 - 2. Literate: From 1500 to c.a. 1965 the church primarily used words.
 - 3. Modern: From c.a. 1965 to c.a. 1995 churches often turned worship into spectator events.
 - 4. Postmodern: What are faithful churches doing now? (See also Ps. 96:3)
- C. What has God called us to do at GCC? Participative worship/various backgrounds.
 - 1. In the past five months, we've introduced new facets into our service.
 - 2. In the next few months, we're going to introduce two new facts.
 - 3. The key: Participation enhances our sense of celebration.

3. HE EXPECTS PREPARATION – When you come...come with an engaged heart. *Psalm 15:1-5a*

- A. Why don't we come with prepared hearts and minds?
 - 1. We're thinking “old paradigm”. Church is a spectator event. It exists to meet my needs.
 - 2. We're thinking anti-super-naturalistically: Personal preparation doesn't matter.
- B. How do we prepare? Psalm 15
 - 1. Examination – Psalm 15:1
 - 2. Confession – Psalm 15:2-5a
 - 3. Making it practical.