

"Gather for Worship"

Overview



Worship is central to the human experience. It is fair to say that while we may not all worship the same thing, we all worship something - be it a person, place or thing.

And while we may all have an innate tendency to revere and adore on our own, what may not be so obvious is that (from the Christian perspective) worship is not just a solitary exercise. It is something God intends for us to pursue in community.

God's Word has much to say about worship and the corporate nature of our life together as the Body of Christ. This lesson will consider how the early church pursued both of these things right from its inception.

Getting Started *Corporate Adoration*



1. Music is often associated with worship as it speaks in a unique way to the soul. What song(s) do you especially like to hear (it does not have to be a song you would necessarily hear in church)?
 2. Are there some activities that tend to draw you into the worship of God more readily than others (music, walking in the outdoors, visiting with friends, reading Scripture, something else)? Why do you think that activity prompts you to worship?
 3. In what ways do you see people in our culture engaging in corporate worship apart from a church setting?
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The Text



⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

The Audio (optional)



"Gather for Worship " - by Kyle Corbin, Sept. 15/19

NOTES: _____

Understanding



1. What has just happened prior to the activities described in verse 42? How might this have prompted the actions described in this passage? What else in Jesus' teaching and example might have encouraged such a response (consider Mark 1:21-22, Luke 22:14-20)?
2. What are the specific activities that the people engage in (vs. 42)? How is each one of these activities:
 - an expression of the worship of God?
 - something that contributes to our spiritual growth and health?
 - an opportunity for us to encounter Jesus?
3. How do the people respond to what they see happening at this point in the life of the early church (vs. 43)? Why do you think they react this way? Do you see a similar response amongst the majority of God's people today? Why or why not?
4. What was the attitude of the people towards their possessions (vs. 44-45)? Does this mean that we should not have any personal possessions or wealth? How is the attitude of God's people here (towards material things) an expression of worship (consider Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:15-16)?
5. Where were the people gathering at this time (vs. 46) and how often? Does this mean we should be in church and other people's homes every day? Does this suggest anything about the way we should do church today?
6. What was the result of this kind of lifestyle (vs. 47)? Why do you think it had that effect?

Applying



1. "Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father. It is kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches our human spirit. Forms and rituals do not produce worship, nor does the disuse of forms and rituals. We can use all the right methods, we can have the best possible liturgy, but we have not worshiped the Lord until His Spirit touches our spirit." - Richard Foster
Celebration of Discipline

Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? How do the various activities seen in Acts 2:42-47 prepare us to receive a touch from the Holy Spirit? How is each activity pursued in our worship gatherings?

2. Worship is often thought of in personal, individual terms. Is it important that our worship of God (and our walk with Christ) also be a corporate exercise (i.e. practiced with other people)? Why or why not?
3. What commitment did the people of the early church have towards their corporate gatherings (vs. 42)? Do you feel the same way? Why or why not? What do we miss out on when we do not attend church regularly?
4. How important is the condition of our heart as we gather for worship (Eccl. 5:1-7)? Consider also Jer. 17:10, Matt. 15:1-9. How can we prepare our heart for a worship service?
5. Has what you have studied today suggested any way in which you need to change the way you approach a worship gathering?

Memory Verse(s)



They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 (NIV)

Extra Resources



- ❖ *"Gather for Worship"* by Pastor Kyle Corbin ("Immanuel Church" website, Sept. 15, 2019). Pastor Kyle reviews the ways the early church pursued the worship of God in their corporate life together.
- ❖ *"What Is Worship?"* by John Piper ("Desiring God" website, April 29, 2016). In this short article, Piper helps define what worship is (and what it is not).
- ❖ *"Worship"* by Greg Ogden ("Discipleship Essentials", IVP Connect, 2018, pg. 40 (chapter 6)). This chapter of Ogden's book is a Bible Study presenting worship as the primary purpose of the church (with a particular emphasis on God's holiness).