



Core Seminars—Living as a Church
Class 12: Corporate Worship:
Celebrating God-Given Unity

3. In corporate worship, we edify each other

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.” – Ephesians 5:19 (NIV)

- Suggestions on how to sing for mutual edification:
 1. Meditate on how the songs apply to others
 2. Encourage others with your body language
 3. Sing loudly with joy
 4. Strive to sing as part of the whole

4. Corporate worship offers a taste of heaven

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.” – Hebrews 12:22-24

“Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so. This side of the Fall, *human worship* of God properly responds to the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made. While all true worship is God-centered, *Christian worship* is no less Christ-centered. Empowered by the Spirit and in line with the stipulations of the new covenant, it manifests itself in all our living, finding its impulse in the gospel, which restores our relationship with our Redeemer-God and therefore also with our fellow image-bearers, our co-worshippers. Such worship therefore manifests itself both in adoration and in action, both in the individual believer and in *corporate worship*, which is worship offered up in the context of the body of believers, who strive to align all the forms of their devout ascription of all worth to God with the panoply of new covenant mandates and examples that bring to fulfillment the glories of antecedent revelation and anticipate the consummation.” - D.A. Carson, *Worship by the Book*, p. 26

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I. Introduction

- God is seeking worshippers who worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)
- A connection between worship and unity

II. Definition of Worship

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” – Romans 12:1

- Worship is “engaging with God on the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible.”
- Worship is God-centered
- Worship is Christ-centered
- Worship is Spirit-empowered
- Summary of Biblical Worship:
 1. It’s a proper response to God
 2. It encompasses our entire lives
 3. We should delight in the beauty of God, not in the *experience* of our worship

III. Definition of Corporate Worship

Corporate worship: *Gathering publicly as a church to engage with God according to his instructions in Scripture.*

Prescribed elements of corporate worship

- Pray (Col 4:2-4, 1 Tim 2:1-2)
- Read scripture publicly (1 Tim 4:13, Col 4:15-16)
- Preach and teach the Word (Acts 2:42, 1 Tim 4:13)
- Baptize believers (Matt 28:19) and share the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11)
- Sing to encourage one another and praise God (Eph 5:19, Col 3:16, Heb 13:15)
- Give financially (1 Cor 16:1-2)

Worshiping God according to his instruction

Examples of unauthorized worship:

- Second commandment (Ex 20:4) / Golden Calf (Ex 32)
- Offering of "unauthorized fire" (Lev 10:1)
- Worship of the Pharisees (Mark 7:7)

Implications:

- Expository preaching is the center of corporate worship
- Hearing and responding to the preaching of God's Word is the centerpiece of our worship gathering

IV. Seeking Unity in Corporate Worship

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

– Philippians 2:3-4

- Submit to each other for the sake of Christ
- Worship out of a sense of need for God, rather than fullness
- Thoughts on building this unity:
 1. Sacrifice your preferences
 2. Growth is possible
 3. Be considerate of others
 4. Honesty about our church culture, and about challenges adjusting to that culture

V. Corporate Worship as a Platform for Unity

1. Corporate worship displays our God-glorifying unity

- God made us a people to declare his praises (1 Pet 2:9)
- Deal with disunity *before* corporate worship
"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." – Matthew 5:23-24

"For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." – I Corinthians 11:29

2. In corporate worship, we can help each other to worship God