

Worshipping God

January 18, 2009

Purpose of Worship

- Worship is intended to glorify God, first and foremost
- Evangelism is not the primary intent or focus of worship, although it may happen
- Worship is God-focused and God-centered; it is not Man-focused or Man-centered
- Worship is accomplished when God's people congregate together and give Him glory and honor
- Worship is not entertainment; we do not go to be entertained or to "get something out of it;" rather, we worship to "put something in" – to give God glory
- Worship should be approached reverently, joyously, and eagerly – we should desire to go to worship, it is the highpoint of the week

Regulative Principle of Worship

- WCF XXI.1. The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and does good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might (Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:24; Ps. 119:68; Jer. 10:7; Ps. 31:23; 18:3; Rom. 10:12; Ps. 62:8; Jos. 24:14; Mk. 12:33); **but the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture** (Dt. 12:32; Mt. 15:9; Acts 17:25; Mt. 4:9-10; Ex. 20:4-6)
- The "Regulative Principle" states that God may only be worshiped according to His revealed will; only those elements of worship expressly commanded in Scripture may be used
- The "Regulative Principle" is in contrast to the "Normative Principle" of worship, which teaches that whatever is not prohibited in Scripture is permitted in worship, as long as it is agreeable to the peace and unity of the Church

Worship at Covenant PCA

- Intent
 - God-focused, God-centered; not Man-focused, Man-centered
 - Reverent; give God the glory
 - Full of prayer, Scripture, and Scripturally-based psalms & hymns
 - Connections to the Church Universal
 - Creeds, Lord's Prayer
 - Doxology, Gloria Patri
 - Westminster Confession of Faith Shorter Catechism

- Statements on Our Website (www.covenantpca.org/worship)
 - At Covenant we believe that the center of our Christian week is the corporate worship of the Triune God on Sunday
 - We worship at 11:00 am (after Sunday School) and again at 6:00 pm
 - As Christians we are called to worship God as He speaks to us through the reading of Scripture and through preaching, since faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of God (Romans 10:17)
 - As He draws near to us we are called to respond by prayer, praise, and worship
 - In everthing we do, we seek to worship God in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24)

- Order of Worship
 - God Calls Us
 - God Cleanses Us
 - God Consecrates Us
 - God Communicates with Us
 - God Commissions Us

- God Acts upon Us, and We Respond:
 - In coming to worship Him
 - In giving Him praise and glory through prayers and singing
 - In repenting and seeking forgiveness for sins
 - In dedicating ourselves and our possessions to Him
 - In hearing and receiving His Word in faith
 - In receiving His blessing and going out into the world to live as becomes children of God

Worship Music

- Music
 - Music creates a mood, sets a tone
 - Music in the worship service should be appropriate – reverent
 - Not all musical styles or types are appropriate for worship
 - Music from all ages of the church should be used
 - New tunes can be used if they are appropriate and fit the words
 - After all, at some point in history, every tune we sing today was “new”
 - We want to use the best of the old tunes and the new tunes
 - Instruments
 - The use of instruments in worship is permitted (*e.g.*, Psalm 150)
 - Not all instruments are appropriate, but certainly many are
 - The use of multiple instruments creates a more “glorious” sound and increases the glory of the worship
- Lyrics
 - We are to sing “Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
 - Psalms, hymns, and songs:
 - Declare the Word of God
 - Are prayers to God
 - The Psalms are intended for corporate worship and should always be sung
 - The Bible contains many other songs and psalms outside of the Psalter that could and should be used (*e.g.*, Ex. 15; Jdg. 5; 1 Sam. 2; 2 Sam. 22; Luke 1; Luke 2; Rev. 4, 5)
 - Words of hymns and songs should be Biblically-based
 - The best hymns are “Psalm-like”
 - New words can be used, but they should pass the “gravitas” test