



HOW TO COME TO CHURCH - CORPORATE WORSHIP

WHAT IS IT?

Corporate worship is an intentional time (usually weekly) when the church gathers together to exalt God, receive edification and exhortation, encounter His presence, and facilitate evangelism.

WHY DO IT?

While we can experience and pursue God in our private lives and devotions, we were made for more than a personal relationship with God. God Himself exists in community (the Trinity); therefore, His people—His image-bearers, ambassadors, and His body—are called to do the same. He has ordained corporate gatherings both as a means of grace to us and as the ultimate goal of our existence.

According to Don Whitney, *“There’s an element of worship and Christianity that cannot be experienced in private worship or by watching worship. There are some graces and blessings that God gives only in the ‘meeting together’ with other believers”* ([Spiritual Disciplines](#), 92).

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Corporate worship has always been a regular part of believers’ lives as we find examples of it in the Old Testament, New Testament, and in the early writings of the church fathers.

You made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign on the earth. ¹¹ *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands.* ¹² *They said with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”*
[Revelation 5:10-12]

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Jesus set the example for us by withdrawing to be alone with the Father (Luke 2:42). This practice of our Lord encourages us to intentionally seek ways to turn the volume down, unplug, and be alone with God.

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO CORPORATE WORSHIP

Corporate worship after the resurrection of Christ consists of the following practices:

- Reading and preaching of Scripture (I Timothy 4:14)
- Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:18-19, Colossians 3:16)
- Praying (I Timothy 2:1-2,8)
- Celebrating baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 11:17-34)
- Encouraging one another to love and do good works (Hebrews 10:24-25)

These practices help usher grace into our lives, exalt God with unity and intensity, and kindle holy affections in us.

GIVE IT A TRY!

1) Settle the debate.

Very few people debate that we should exercise and drink water (whether or not we actually do those things is another story). However, many people openly debate whether or not Christ-followers should consistently participate in corporate or gathered church. If we are consistently asking, “*Should I go to church this weekend or not?*”, then we are opening ourselves up to a host of excuses and distractions.

Let’s settle matters in our hearts as it is already settled in God’s Word and the 2000-plus year history of the Church—consistent corporate worship is a non-negotiable part of the Christian walk.

2) The service starts before you arrive.

The hard truth is that most of us walk into worship services not ready to worship. Maybe we’re frustrated with our kids, discouraged about work, or distracted by a problem or even a hobby.

Let’s just acknowledge this reality and ask God to help us calibrate ourselves to be ready to worship Him.

3) Worship starts in the heart, and the heart needs to be focused and led.

We can determine the focus and attention of our heart by placing something before it.

If we are looking at our phones and the latest notification, our heart will pay attention to that. If we are dwelling on last night’s game or next week’s tasks, the heart will follow.

So before we enter a worship service, perhaps we should silence our phones; even better, let’s put them in “do not disturb” mode. Then read a psalm, quote a Bible verse, or sing a worship song ... in other words, let your heart’s attention go up toward God and become centered on Him.

4) Arrive early.

Arriving late or even on time makes focusing on God even harder because we are rushed. Arrive early, get seated (and settled) early and do the work of centering your heart (see #3 above).

5) Maximize the first moments.

Jump in the deep end! No matter how the service starts (Scripture reading, praying, opening song, greeting, etc.) resolve to participate ... so sing, think, pray, and go hard after God!