

# Worship the Lord

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness –*Psalm 29:2*

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## Opening worship

Begin your study of God’s word by reading together **Hebrews 10:19-25**. What a wonderful privilege it is to enter into the presence of God through Jesus our High Priest and give him worship, praise and thanksgiving!

## Opening prayer

The leader will offer a prayer to the Lord, asking that our worship may be pleasing and acceptable in his sight, for Jesus’ sake.

## Introduction

In Lesson One we considered the object of our worship—the Lord God—and worship which is fitting and proper according to the pattern which God himself has prescribed.

In all aspects of our church life, our *practice* is formed by our *theology*. To put this another way, what we *do* is a reflection of what we *believe*.

## Corporate worship—whom is it for?

When we design and implement worship services, we must ask ourselves, “Who will be doing the worshipping? What cultural setting do these people come from? How can the style and setting facilitate and serve the purpose of worship?” The answers to these questions do not change the object of our worship (God), nor do they change the fundamental way in which he is worshiped (in spirit and in truth; with joy and gladness; with reverence and awe; proclaiming the great things he has done), but it will shape some elements of the setting in which the worship takes place.

Read **Isaiah 59:2,3**. What barrier prevents human beings from having access to God?

Read **Hebrews 10:19-22**. How alone is this barrier removed?

Read **John 14:6** and **Ephesians 2:14-18**. Who, then, are the only people who can truly worship the Lord?

Read **Hebrews 10:23-25**. We conclude from this that the corporate worship service is for \_\_\_\_\_, because only they have access to God’s presence through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Read **1 Corinthians 14:22-25**. At the same time, the setting of corporate worship is to be sensitive to \_\_\_\_\_ who might happen to be present at the worship service.

The term *seeker service* is used to describe worship services which cater to the unchurched, people who may be looking for a place to worship and trying different churches. Is the primary purpose of Christian corporate worship to reach out to seekers or as a tool for evangelism?

## Theology informs our practice: We practice what we believe

Worship in spirit and in truth assumes a correct understanding of Scripture (correct doctrine) that centers our worship properly in the things of God. Worship that flows from flawed theology and doctrinal error will always be shaped by that false theology.

Many worship trends in America today are shaped by a fundamentalist evangelical theology which is incompatible with the doctrine of Scripture. When we place theological considerations side by side, we see that there is much more to worship than just the style and form, but that the style is driven by the theological underpinnings. When we approach worship from a correct theological perspective, it becomes easier to make choices about form and style that reflect truth—not only in doctrine but in practice.

	<b>Evangelical doctrine</b> <i>Among "Evangelicals" are included Baptists, Pentecostals, non-denominational or "Community" churches, charismatic churches, etc. Conservative Presbyterians and "Reformed" churches are properly called "Calvinist," which differs in several respects from evangelical but parallels in other areas.</i>	<b>Confessional Lutheran doctrine</b> <i>The confessional Evangelical Lutheran church confesses the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant, infallible word of God and confesses the Book of Concord of 1580 as a correct exposition of Scripture.</i>
<b>God</b>	The supreme characteristics of God are his glory, sovereignty, majesty and power.	The supreme characteristic of God is his grace, revealed in his salvation of sinners (John 3:16).
<b>Jesus Christ</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus is the Son of God, begotten from eternity.</li> <li>2. Jesus' divine and human natures are <i>not</i> personally united in one person. There remains a distinction between his divine and human nature.</li> <li>3. Mary is not called "Mother of God," but only mother of Jesus' human nature.</li> <li>4. Jesus' divine nature is omnipresent; his human nature is localized in heaven at the right hand of God.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus is the Son of God, begotten from eternity (John 1:1).</li> <li>2. Jesus' divine and human natures are personally united in one person, so that the attributes of either nature can be ascribed to the person of Christ (John 1:14).</li> <li>3. Mary is the mother of God, for in Christ, the Son of Mary, exists all of the fullness of the deity (Col. 2:9).</li> <li>4. Jesus' entire person is omnipresent, even as he is seated at the right hand of God, for both divine and human natures are united in one person (Matthew 28:20).</li> </ol>
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Spirit testifies, comforts and speaks to sinners.</li> <li>2. The presence of the Spirit can be felt and should be sought in personal religious experience.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Spirit speaks through the living and powerful word of God (Isaiah 55:8-11).</li> <li>2. The Spirit works through the objective truth of God's word, whether we feel it or not (John 3:8).</li> </ol>
<b>Man</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Man is infected by sin, but it does not render him completely depraved nor completely helpless.</li> <li>2. Every person has a free will to choose or reject God.</li> <li>3. Man can improve his nature and become a better person with God's help.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Man is by nature spiritually dead, spiritually depraved, and an enemy of God who cannot help himself (Ephesians 2:1).</li> <li>2. Natural man (an unbeliever) has no free will, has no choice to accept God, and cannot do anything to please God (Romans 8:5-8, 1 Cor. 1:18).</li> <li>3. Man's sinful nature will always remain part of him this side of eternity, and in his natural self he will always be a slave to sin (Romans 7:14-25)</li> </ol>
<b>Justification</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus died to take away the sin of the world.</li> <li>2. Little or no emphasis on Jesus' <i>active obedience</i> for us.</li> <li>3. Jesus' death forgives our sins; now we strive for righteousness through obedience in following Jesus (WWJD?).</li> <li>4. Jesus <i>saves</i>. Emphasizes the personal, experiential nature of salvation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus died to take away the sin of the world (1 John 2:2).</li> <li>2. Jesus kept the law <i>for us</i> as our substitute, and his obedience is credited to us through faith (Hebrews 4:14-16).</li> <li>3. Jesus' death and resurrection has made us forgiven and completely perfect and righteous, for the sake of Jesus' completed work (Romans 4:25).</li> <li>4. Jesus <i>saved</i> (John 19:30). Emphasizes the objective, completed nature of salvation.</li> </ol>
<b>Conversion</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Faith is a choice that man makes. His free will allows him to accept or reject Christ.</li> <li>2. Faith is reasonable.</li> <li>3. A baby cannot believe, because an infant cannot make a decision for Christ.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Faith has nothing to do with man's choice. Faith is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 2:4,5).</li> <li>2. Reason is the enemy of faith (1 Cor. 1:18-25).</li> <li>3. The same Spirit who works faith in an adult works faith in the hearts of infants through the gospel (Matthew 18:6).</li> </ol>
<b>Word of God</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generally have a high view of Scripture. The Bible is inspired and true.</li> <li>2. Correct doctrine is not as important as right living. We should pursue "deeds, not creeds."</li> <li>3. We must agree on "fundamental" doctrines, but we can disagree on doctrines that don't impact salvation.</li> <li>4. The word of God is persuasive. It convicts of sin and proclaims Christ and presents the case for Christianity, offering man the choice to believe.</li> <li>5. The word of God is relevant when it finds application to our lives. More important than truth itself is application of the truth for daily living.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Bible is unerring and infallible (2 Timothy 3:16).</li> <li>2. Life and doctrine are important (1 Timothy 4:16).</li> <li>3. It is not for us to decide what is important or not in Scripture, for it is God's word. While many will be saved in spite of the false doctrine they may hold, any false teaching—if carried to its ultimate conclusion—can undermine saving faith and lead to destruction (Matthew 28:19-20).</li> <li>4. The word of God is living and active. The word itself creates and sustains saving faith (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 10:17).</li> <li>5. Truth is relevant for its own sake, because it is the word of God (John 17:17).</li> </ol>
<b>Means of Grace</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God does not use means (tools) to reach people. He works <i>immediately</i> (without means) to touch people's hearts.</li> <li>2. There are no such things as "sacraments." God has established "ordinances" to remind people of what he does for them.</li> <li>3. Baptism has no power to save. It offers no forgiveness, and it creates no faith. It is merely a reminder and symbol of what God has done for believers. Typically practice "believer's</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God has bound himself to his word and sacraments as the means (tools) through which he creates and sustains saving faith (Romans 10:17; Isaiah 55:8-11; Titus 3:4-7; Matthew 26:26-28).</li> <li>2. The Holy Spirit uses the sacraments (mysteries) of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion to create, sustain and strengthen saving faith (see verses following).</li> <li>3. Baptism delivers from death and the devil, brings the forgiveness of sins, causes a person to be reborn in Christ (Titus 3:5; John 3:5; 1</li> </ol>

	<p>baptism.”</p> <p>4. There is no such thing as “Holy Communion.” The “Lord’s Supper” is a memorial ordinance, in which the bread and the fruit of the vine (wine or juice) remind us of Jesus’ death. The body and blood are not really present (since his human nature is localized in heavn), and there is no forgiveness of sins offered.</p> <p>5. The Lord’s Supper is for everyone who desires it, since it is merely a memorial meal and expression of community.</p>	<p>Peter 3:21).</p> <p>4. Holy Communion (the Eucharist, or the Sacrament of the Altar, etc.) gives us the true body and blood of Christ, together with the bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening of our faith (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-32).</p> <p>5. Holy Communion is only for baptized believers, who have examined themselves, are penitent, and understand what they are receiving in the sacrament. As they participate in the sacrament, communicants also proclaim their oneness in faith (1 Cor. 10:16,17; 11:23-32).</p>
<b>Holy Ministry</b>	<p>1. A Christian may serve as a pastor, preach and teach if he (less frequently, <i>she</i>) feels called by God to do so.</p> <p>2. The pastor serves as a coach, counselor, mentor and role model.</p> <p>3. The pastor has no authority to forgive or to retain sins.</p> <p>4. The pastor is to exhort and persuade the people, so that unbelievers may be converted and believers may be encouraged to live a godly life. A good preacher is dynamic and relates well to the people.</p>	<p>1. Only those who have been rightly called by God through the congregation of the believers may rightly serve publicly as pastors, teachers or elders (Hebrews 5:4).</p> <p>2. The pastor represents Christ to the congregation. He is the voice of Christ speaking in the midst of God’s people, as he proclaims the powerful word of God. He is accountable to Christ for the way he uses his divine authority (John 20:21; Hebrews 13:17).</p> <p>3. The pastor exercises the Ministry of the Keys in the name of the congregation of Christ, and has authority to forgive or to retain sins (John 20:21-23).</p> <p>4. The pastor is to unleash the power of the Holy Spirit by faithfully proclaiming law and gospel. God does the work, and God gives the increase. The pastor is merely “Balaam’s donkey,” a mouthpiece for the Lord (2 Timothy 4; Numbers 22:22-41).</p>
<b>Prayer</b>	<p>1. Prayer is a means through which we speak to God, and God responds to us through our emotions and sentiments.</p> <p>2. Through prayer we can come to decisions or understanding about things which God has not revealed in his word. (Example: Should I buy a new car or not? Let me pray about it, and come to a decision.)</p>	<p>1. Prayer is a means through which we speak to God. God speaks to us through his word, not through our feelings.</p> <p>2. We are invited to take all things to God in prayer. He will answer them in his time, according to his will. God does not necessarily reveal his will about particular decisions, but in his word he lays out principles of Christian sanctification and invites us to do all things to his glory in the righteousness of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31).</p>
<b>Worship</b>	<p>1. Worship is categorically <i>anthropocentric</i> (centered on the participants’ worship experience).</p> <p>2. Worship is basically law-oriented. The emphasis is on practical ways to live for Christ. “How-to” teaching.</p> <p>3. The purpose of worship is to exhort and persuade. The worship setting should provide an environment where people are turned on, uplifted, charged up, or otherwise impacted emotionally. In the proper frame of mind, unbelievers can then make their choice for Jesus, and Christians can recommit themselves to Jesus for another week.</p> <p>4. Worship should be “relevant.” God’s word should be applied and appropriated in practical ways.</p> <p>5. The pastor is a guy just like you. He relates to you on your level and possesses no distinguishing authority. This is evident in his dress and appearance (khakis and polo shirt, or nice suit).</p> <p>6. The Lord’s Supper is celebrated infrequently and without power, offering no forgiveness. It is merely a memorial meal.</p> <p>7. If a person “doesn’t get anything out of the service,” the problem may be with the worship style or form of worship itself. It is important to adapt and change the style to keep it fresh and relevant, so it has the most chance to impact people.</p> <p>8. Worship style is important, because the power is not essentially in the word but in the <i>way</i> the word is presented: with impact, relevance, etc.</p>	<p>1. Worship is to be <i>theocentric</i> (centered on God) (Matthew 4:10).</p> <p>2. Worship is essentially gospel-oriented. The emphasis is on Christ for us, his active obedience, and his death and resurrection. The law is used primarily to convict and lead to repentance, while the gospel binds up and heals with forgiveness, and motivates Christian living as a natural consequence of faith (Mark 16:15).</p> <p>3. The worship service is a divine dialog between God and his people. God refreshes his people with word and sacrament, assures of his forgiveness, and through the gospel imparts comfort and strength to sinners struggling against the devil, the world around them, and their own flesh (Psalm 96:8).</p> <p>4. The mere fact that God’s truth is proclaimed is, in itself, relevant, for it is God himself who is speaking to us (2 Timothy 4:1-5).</p> <p>5. The pastor is a sinner who has been redeemed by Jesus’ blood and covered with Jesus’ righteousness. He serves in the office of the ministry as a vicar (representative) for Christ. His alb symbolizes Christ’s pure righteousness covering his sin. The stole represents the yoke of his office of the ministry as an under-shepherd of Christ’s flock. The white clerical collar represents the proclamation of the pure word of God. (Acts 20:28 speaks to the office of the ministry. There is no scriptural mandate for clergy dress.)</p> <p>6. Holy Communion is celebrated as often as possible as the banquet meal which Christ sets before us for the forgiveness of our sins. It is the heart of the gospel, precious comfort for souls, and foretaste of heaven (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).</p> <p>7. If a person “doesn’t get anything out of the service,” it is the result of his own stubbornness and ego. If God’s word is proclaimed in its fullness (law and gospel, rightly applied) and the sacraments are administered rightly, man is without excuse. God’s word will not return to him empty (Isaiah 55:8-11; Romans 11:33-36).</p> <p>8. Confessional Lutherans are free to adopt forms and styles that serve the gospel, as long as the centrality of word, sacrament and keys is maintained.</p>