

The Biblical Basis for Worship.

- I. Introduction.
 - A. Our Purpose:
 1. To understand why we do what we do in worship from a Reformed perspective.
 2. To understand the Regulative Principle of Worship.
 - B. Our Method: to examine the Biblical and theological basis for worship and apply it to the practice of worship.
 - C. A Vital Topic.
 1. Its importance. The highest purpose for which God saved us is to worship Him (Jn. 4:23-24).
 2. Its timeliness. The many innovations introduced into worship by many churches. Lack of understanding of what Scripture has to say about worship. Lack of understanding by many Christians about why we do what we do in worship.
 3. The need for a Reformed consensus. There are differing opinions even among Reformed people. Even among Reformed circles, plenty of churches follow a broadly evangelical model in worship, then attempt to find a Biblical rationale for it—a backward approach.
 4. Are we contemporary or traditional? Neither; we are regulative and covenantal. Covenant theology structures the Scriptures, defines

God's dealings with man, and our response to Him, which includes worship. Our response is to be in accord with God's revealed will; thus, our worship is regulative.

II. The Nature of Worship.

A. Definition of Worship: Covenantal worship is adoration of God and service offered to God as Father through the Mediator, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, in response to the grace of God revealed in the gospel, in acceptable communion. An enhancement: Worship is the way in which sinners saved by grace are allowed to hold communication and communion with God in an acceptable manner to render to Him the glory, honor, and submission which are His due.

B. Biblical Terms and Texts.

1. "Worship": fall on the ground in adoration (Ex. 20:5; Matt. 4:9-10).
2. "Serve": to serve as a slave or servant; to offer acts of worship to God (Ex. 3:12; Phil. 3:3).
3. "Minister": to do acts of worship; the Greek is the word from which we get "liturgy" (Ex. 28:35; Acts 13:2).
4. "Worship": venerate (Mt. 15:9).
5. "Worship": religious observance (Col. 2:18).

III. The Duty to Worship.

- A. A Duty Owed to God because of Creation (Ps. 100:1; Rom. 1:18-23).
- B. A Duty Owed to God because of Redemption (Ex. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2).
- C. A Duty Owed because of Who God Is and What He Does (Ps. 100:3, 5).

1. A duty owed, in the broad sense, in all of life (Rom. 12:1-2).
2. A duty owed, in the narrow sense, in private, family, and corporate worship.
 - a. In private and family worship (Dan. 6:10; Josh. 24:15).
 - b. Corporate worship: the primary expression (Lev. 23; Acts 2:46). God commanded corporate worship among His people, OT and NT: by Israel as the OT visible church, from the beginning of the nation, not just in the temple, but in their local dwelling places each week (Lev. 23:1-3; Ps. 74:8); by the NT church (Acts 2:46). The importance of this is seen in Ps. 22:22ff. as “Christ leads His people in corporate worship in the proclamation of His works and payment of their vows” (Pipa); and in Jn. 4:22-14 as God has saved us to be His worshipers.
 - c. Blessings attached (Matt. 18:19-20; Larger Catech. 154). James Bannerman: “...the blessing upon ordinances is but half a blessing when enjoyed alone...All the parts of church worship belong in a peculiar and emphatic sense to the Church...”

IV. The Purpose of Worship.

- A. Communion with God (Ps. 100:3, 5). An exchange between our hearts and God as we come to see Him in His loveliness and hear Him speak to us.
- B. Adoration of God (Ps. 100:1, 2, 4). And praise.

- C. Edification of God's People (Ps. 96:2; 100:3). This occurs in all elements of worship, not just preaching. E.g., Ps. 32, God instructs us as we sing.
- V. The Object of Worship: God the Father, through the Mediator, by the Holy Spirit. The triune God is the recipient. Thus, our communion in worship is with the triune God. Thus, our worship is to be God-centered, not man-centered. We are not there for the sake of our feelings. Blessing and emotional satisfaction may accompany our worship, but we seek to direct worship to God, not self.
 - A. To God as Father (John 4:22-24). Covenantal worship is the act of the covenant people to God as Father. It is not primarily an evangelistic tool, but the family of God meeting with their Father. Thus, it must not be crafted for pagans, or directed to their interests. We allow them in, but if God has been with us, they will leave either angry, unhappy, or converted (1 Cor. 14:24-25).
 - B. Through Christ as Mediator (1 Pet. 2:5). Only as we are in Christ, the Savior and Mediator, can we know God and have access to God (Eph. 2). Christ's justifying work makes our worship acceptable in Him to God.
 - C. By the Spirit (John 4:24). From hearts with Spirit-given new life that is spiritual life; i.e., regenerate hearts enabled by the Holy Spirit to worship God.
- VI. Conclusion: "The purpose of worship is to adore and serve God, commune with Him, and learn from Him." (Dr. J. Pipa.)