

The Necessity Of Worship

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The purpose of this article is not to point out the "items of worship." This article is to point to the necessity of worship. The word worship has an interesting definition. It is a compound word and means to kiss towards. Thus we find the idea of "to make obeisance, do reverence to." This is the meaning of worship as found in Matt. 4:10; John 4:21-24 and I Cor. 14:25. Another word for worship means "to revere, stressing the feeling of awe or devotion," and is found in verses such as Matt. 15:9 and Acts 19:27. Worship can also mean "to honor religiously" as in Rom. 1:25.

To a believer in God, it seems strange to stress the necessity of worship. However, even believers can become careless.

Jesus set forth a principle that is both mind-boggling and spiritually thrilling. He said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him MUST worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). God wants us to worship him. God also seeks "true worshippers," who will worship Him "in spirit and in truth." Another translation renders verse 23 accordingly: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, FOR THEY ARE THE KIND OF WORSHIPERS the Father seeks."

We see that God seeks true worshippers, and Jesus defined these as those who worship in spirit, or with sincere hearts, and in truth, or according to God's word (John 8:32 and John 17:17).

WORSHIP FROM THE BEGINNING

In Genesis 4, both Cain and Abel brought offerings "unto the Lord." Cain's was rejected because it was not of faith (Rom. 10:17 and Heb. 11:4), or according to the truth.

One of the outstanding features of Abraham, the father of our faith, is that he was always building altars "unto the Lord." When he first came into Canaan he built "an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 12:7). He soon moved and again "he built an altar" (Gen. 12:23). This he did repeatedly in Bethel (13:4), Hebron (13:18), Beersheba (21:33), Moriah (22:9) and other places. This was a common practice of the patriarchs. Of old, the men of God not only found a necessity of believing in God, but of having a PLACE OF WORSHIP.

Christian fathers are very remiss who do not provide a place of worship for their families, first in the privacy of their homes and then in a faithful and true congregation of worshippers. The Bible says: "And, YOU FATHERS, provoke not your children to wrath (i.e. do not irritate, exasperate, and anger your children to resentment); BUT bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The nurture and admonition has to do with "the whole training and education" of the child. It is not only NECESSARY that fathers provide places of worship for their families, but that they also be actively engaged in the spiritual training and

education of their children.

WORSHIP UNDER THE OLD LAW

When it came to the PUBLIC WORSHIP under the old law, God, as the object of worship, decreed how it was to be done. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: But IN THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD SHALL CHOOSE in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee" (Deut. 12:13-14). Also, the first of the ten commandments was: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

WORSHIP UNDER THE NEW LAW

The PLACE OF WORSHIP under the new covenant is different from that of the old, according to Jesus (John 4:21). Publicly, Christians band together and meet in agreed upon places. We can read of "the whole church" coming together (I Cor. 14:23), or of those coming in who are "unlearned, or unbelievers" (14:24). (Read esp. I Cor. 14:19-40).

Most groups claiming belief in the New Testament believe in the church coming together, but few stress THE NECESSITY of PUBLIC WORSHIP. Just as it is a sin for fathers not to provide for the spiritual training and education of their children, IT IS A SIN to forsake the weekly meeting with the local congregation. We are speaking of the assembling for the Lord's Supper. Acts 20:7 clearly teaches that it was upon the first day of the week "WHEN the disciples came together to break bread," or observe the Lord's Supper.

Acts 2:42 shows there was a regularity in what the early Christians did. They CONTINUED STEDFASTLY. Heb. 10:25 definitely shows a grievous sin is committed by "forsaking the assembling." Also, not only is a collection commanded on the first day of the week, but some Greek texts read, "On the first day of EVERY week." Tell me, how can one keep this command, to be performed EVERY WEEK, by forsaking the assembling?

GOSPEL SERVICES

Although space is limited, I am compelled to say something of public services for the purpose of edification and the preaching of the gospel. Much is being done to destroy the value of these services, showing a complete disrespect for God's word. One need only begin with I Corinthians the first chapter where Paul lays great stress upon the PUBLIC preaching of the gospel, and how worthless it seemed to certain Jews and Greeks. A summary is found in verse 21: "It PLEASSED GOD by the foolishness of preaching (public - see the Greek) to save them that believe." The necessity of worship cannot be overemphasized. "With my spirit" I serve God, said Paul. Thus, of necessity, true worship is geared to the mind of man, directed by the Spirit of God, through the word of God. To be carnally minded (or having a mind devoted to the flesh) is death; but to be spiritually minded (or having a mind devoted to the things of the Spirit) is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

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