

## 1 **UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP(4)**

The "Acts" of Worship

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- All my life I've heard of the five "acts" (singing, praying, preaching, giving, Lord's Supper) of worship.
- If one begins to search for a list or NT example of a worship service in which all five are found – you won't.
- That is not to say that the five acts are not found in the NT, but they are drawn from scattered references.
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- Each "act" has intrinsic value; it is not just empty action or rhetoric.
- When we "come together," it is the offering of these acts of worship that comprise what is often referred to as a "worship service."
- Must all five occur in a given context in order to worship?
- Our AM Lord's Day gathering (Rev 1:10; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1,2) centers around the eating of the Lord's supper.

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- What about Sun PM or a Wednesday devotional?
- Each act of worship is meaningful in its own right (for example our fifth Sunday singing).
- Consider with me the "horizontal" focus that is intrinsic in worship offered in the context of our "coming together".

## 5 **SINGING**

- (Eph 5:19) *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,*
- (Col 3:16) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*
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- (1 Cor 14:26) *What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.*
- Why do we spend so much of our assembly time singing?
- Music is a powerful tool not only of praise but also of learning.
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- These passages make clear the edifying, teaching aspects of our singing.
- The chants of the first century were much different from our modern four part harmony.
- A memorable song is first meaningful poetry.
- The only instrument which can teach is the human voice.
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## 8 PRAYING

- (1 Cor 14:15-17) *So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. {16} If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? {17} You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.*
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- (Rev 5:8) *And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*
- There is a clear horizontal, as well as vertical, aspect to our prayers.
- The "body of Christ" can pray just as the individual Christian can.
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## 10

- We are not so much "lead" in prayer as it is that we "listen in" to a prayer.
- Your "amen" says you have heard and agree with what was said.
- Note that Paul says we can be edified by the prayers of others (1 Cor 14:17).
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## 11 PREACHING

- (1 Tim 4:13) *Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.*
- (2 Tim 3:16-17 NIV) *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, {17} so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

## 12

- (2 Tim 4:1-2) *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: {2} Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.*
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- It is in this act of worship that we shift from speaking to God to being spoken to by Him.
- The objective power of the word of God to change our thinking and shape our lives is awesome (Rom 1:16,17).
- Collectively staring into the mirror of the word (Jas 1:23) allows us to reset our moral and spiritual compasses.

14  **GIVING**

- (2 Cor 9:6-8 NIV) *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. {7} Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. {8} And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*
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- In this aspect of worship we move from the "fruit of our lips" to the "first fruits" of our physical blessings.
- As we give we not only honor God but "*spur one another on toward love and good deeds*" (Heb 10:24).
- It is in our giving, as much as any act of worship, that both the vertical and horizontal benefits are seen.

16  **LORD'S SUPPER**

- (1 Cor 11:20-29) *When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, {21} for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. {22} Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly*

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*not! {23} For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, {24} and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." {25} In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." {26} For whenever you eat this bread and drink*

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*this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. {27} Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. {28} A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. {29} For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

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- The eating of the Lord's Supper is, by design, an intensely internal experience.
- However, it is also a powerful witness to those brothers and sisters with whom we share this sacred meal.
- It is in this act of worship that the physical senses are brought into play to aid in stirring and reinforcing our memory.
- The Lord's Supper is serious business.