

1 **UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP (2)**

What happens when we "come together"?

2

Let's begin this morning by reviewing our discussion of two critical terms used of worship:

- Latreuo (latreia) – speaks primarily of service to God. Used of the priestly worship in the OT, also used of our lives as "worship" (Rom. 12:1). Carries connotation of deliberation and planning.
- Proskuneo – a heartfelt response to God. Often spontaneous and circumstantial.

3

HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SPEAK OF OUR "WORSHIP SERVICES"?

- First of all, the New Testament uses different terminology for our gatherings.
Mt 18:20 – *For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.*
Acts 20:7 – *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.*

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1 Cor 5:4 – *When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus...*

1 Cor 11:18 – *In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church... 11:20; 11:33; 14:26 use the same terminology.*

1 Cor 11:34 – *If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.*

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1 Cor 14:23 – *So if the whole church comes together...*

Heb 10:25 – *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...*

- A couple of observations:
I want to repeat – Words do matter.
While worship clearly occurs within the assembly, the assembly in the NT is not called a "worship service."

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ACCORDING TO THE NT, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSEMBLY?

- 1 Cor 11:20,33 – to eat the Lord's Supper together
- 1 Cor 14:5 – so that the church may be edified
- 1 Cor 14:12 – to "build up the church"
- 1 Cor 14:26 – "for the strengthening of the church"

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• 1 Cor 14:31 – "so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged"

• Heb 10:25 – "let us encourage one another"

Questions:

- According to the NT, what appears to be the purpose of the assembly?
- Does this reflect the expectation that many bring to our assemblies today?

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WHEN WE COME TOGETHER, TO WHOM IS OUR ATTENTION TO BE DIRECTED?

- Exclusively toward God?
That ignores the strengthening, edifying, encouraging aspect of our gathering that we just saw emphasized.
Pagan worship has no horizontal aspect.
Focusing on the needs of one another is a uniquely NT perspective of worship.

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- Exclusively toward one another?
This ignores the One who brings us together. This would be like having a party and snubbing the guest of honor.
- It seems obvious that our coming together must involve a *dual* focus in what occurs, because that is the *Biblical* focus.
- We must honor God as we edify and encourage each other.

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- WHEN WE COME TOGETHER TO WORSHIP, WHAT TYPE OF WORSHIP ARE WE OFFERING GOD?
- This is a critical question.
- Is our worship primarily *proskuneia*, or *latreia*?
- This very much affects how we view what occurs during our assemblies.

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A partial answer lies in a study of Heb 12:28,29 and Heb 13:15,16.

- Heb 12:28,29 – *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*
“Worship” = “latreuo”
This is in the context of a contrast between Mt. Sinai and heaven.

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- Heb 13:15,16 – *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*
- In verse 10 the Hebrew writer says “*We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.*”

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Minister is rooted in *latreuo*.

- The offering of sacrifices to God is clearly *latreuo*.
- Heb 13:15,16 would speak to the two aspects of *latreuo* we noted earlier:
Planned, regulated worship offered to God - *a sacrifice of praise*.
A way of life - *to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices...*

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- Therefore, it would appear to be safe to say that in our “coming together” *latreuo* occurs as we sing, pray, study from the word and offer *the fruit of lips*.

- What of *proskuneo*?
- We know it can occur in the context of the *latreia* (1 Cor. 14:24,25).
- Is *proskuneo* the primary purpose of our assembly, or a secondary result?
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- This is an important question we'll examine next.
- We will also look at what is to occur during the assembly.