

Gathered worship: who? why? what?

Discuss, while waiting to begin:

1. What's your aim when you come to church on a Sunday morning?
2. What do you expect when you come to church on a Sunday morning?

1: WHAT is the church? = the gathering of God's people

- *qahal, ecclesia* – e.g. Deut. 4:10, 1 Cor. 1:2
- on earth... and in heaven, Hebrews 12:22-23
- church is most "churchly" when she gathers... so "gather"! (Heb. 10:24-25)

2. WHO should gather together? = all sorts of people

- Worship, like the church, is diverse: gender... race... age
- e.g. Deut. 31:12-13, Joshua 8:35, Joel 2:15-16
- So? Expect diversity... and love those who are not like you

3. WHY do we gather to worship? = to meet our holy God

- God's special presence: a "holy" day (Exodus 20:8, Rev. 1:10), "holy" scriptures (1 Timothy 3:15)...
- And the church's worship = Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 5:4, 14:24-25
- So? Expect to meet our holy God

4. WHAT do we do when we gather? = Worship Him in the way that He commands

- Exodus 20:1-5, 32:3-6, Deuteronomy 12:31-32, Colossians 2:23
- * The Bible gives us the elements of true worship *
Bible (and not just the sermon!) – e.g. 1 Timothy 4:13
Baptism and the Lord's Supper – e.g. 1 Cor. 10:16
Prayer and exhortation (spoken and sung) – Ephesians 5:18-20

Hebrews 12:22-23, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,"

Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

Joshua 8:35, "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them."

Matthew 18:18-20, "Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.""

1 Corinthians 14:24-25, "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you."

1 Timothy 4:13, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching..."

1 Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

Given what we've learned from the Bible...

1. How can you make the most of gathered worship?
2. Any other questions or responses?