

The “how” and “why” of WORSHIP

Recommended reading: “Reformed Worship,” by Jonty Rhodes

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. Why does the church gather?

The Bible’s story of Meeting God

- In Eden (e.g. Genesis 3:8)
- At Mount Sinai (e.g. Exodus 24:1-11)
God calls His people... gives His word... cleans them with blood...
His people ascend... and eat & drink with God.
- The Tabernacle
Offerings = “near-bringsings” (Leviticus 1:1-2)
- In Christ and His Gospel (Hebrews 4:16, 7:19, 7:25, 10:22)

God promises His presence in the gathering of his people

- “with you” (Matt 18:20, 1 Cor 5:4, 14:24-25)
- we have “communion” with Christ (1 Cor. 10:16)
- Christ is present as our...
 - o Prophet (Ephesians 2:17): He preaches
 - o Priest (Hebrews 2:12): He is our worship leader
 - o King (1 Cor. 5:4): He rules, protects and provides

➔ **This engagement with God = “worship”**

2. How should the church worship?

God cares about how the church worships

- Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10: “unauthorised” fire
- the 2nd commandment: no images = don’t worship the true God falsely
- ... and the Lord hasn’t changed.

So, in worship we do what he says, and we don’t do what he hasn’t told us to do
= the “regulative principle”

- o We can be sure that we’re pleasing the Lord...
- o and that He will bless us through his “means of grace”...
- o and the church is protected from her leaders going astray.

Pray for his blessing... and make much of the “ordinary means of grace.”

- Christ is building his church (Matt.16:18)... through the Word, wielded by the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22)
 - ➔ So we must pray
- And we want whole services that are saturated in the Word
- “Supernaturally ordinary”

3. What should the church's pattern of worship be like?

** reflect the gospel... renew the covenant **

The Gospel pattern in the offerings of Leviticus

1. Sin or guilt offering: atonement
2. Ascension/burnt: the worshipper ascends to God
3. Grain: give a gift to God
4. Peace: fellowship meal

= the pattern of the Gospel:

God provides atonement → transformation → fellowship.

The typical Reformed pattern of worship: sharing Christ from every angle

God speaks first:

call to worship – e.g. Ps 100:1-2, Ps 118:24

God's people respond:

prayer of invocation and adoration

God speaks:

reading of the law, invitation to confess sin – e.g. 1 Jn 1:8-9, Ps 86:5

God's people respond:

confession of sin – e.g. Pss 51, 130

God speaks:

assurance of pardon – e.g. Romans 8:1

God's people respond:

prayers of intercession

God speaks:

the reading and preaching of God's word – 1 Tim. 4:13, 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Acts 26:23. Eph 2:17
& the Lord's Supper

God's people respond:

we sing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs – Colossians 3:16

God speaks:

to bless and send out his people – e.g. Num 6:22-27.