

NOT EVERYBODY CAN WORSHIP

John 4:24; 14:6 Mark 7:6-7

Introduction: Churches have "worship" times posted on their marquees, listed in their bulletins, published in newspapers and printed on their witness hand-outs. People attend services in Churches that are called "worship" services. "Worship" can be defined as: to idolize, to love unquestioningly and uncritically. So, why are we here today? Why is this service called a "worship" service? Can anybody "worship" the Lord God?

I. GENUINE, TRUE WORSHIP OF THE LORD GOD IS EXCLUSIVE

1. ***"...and they that worship Him MUST worship Him in spirit and in truth."***
 - There is no choice in the matter of worship given to people. There is but one way to worship the Lord God.
 - ***"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye MUST be born again."***
 - ***"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so MUST the son of man be lifted up."***
 - Only those who have been born again and who are resting upon the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ can worship the Lord God.

2. ***"This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me."***
 - A person can be sincere, generous, zealous, devout, regular in attendance, yet be no more capable of worshipping the Lord God than a person without a tongue singing in the choir.

3. In order to worship the Lord God, God must be known and He CANNOT be known apart from Jesus Christ.
 - ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me..."***
 - An unbeliever knows not Jesus Christ nor does he/she know God the Father and therefore cannot worship the Lord God.
 - A believer who is out of God's will cannot worship God, for his/her heart is far away from the Lord God.

II. WHAT IS GENUINE, TRUE WORSHIP?

1. ***"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth."***
 - To worship in "spirit" is not having rites and ceremonies done by people.
 - To worship in "truth" is not bowing before or singing to or recognizing idols and superstitions.
 - To worship in spirit and in truth means GIVING to the Lord God from an enlightened and regenerated heart.

2. To worship in "spirit and in truth" rules out external and spectacular things. It rules out using the bodily senses.
 - God cannot be worshipped by just looking at stained glass images.
 - God cannot be worshipped by just listening to the sounds of a pipe organ.
 - God cannot be worshipped by just burning incense.
 - God cannot be worshipped by just fingering beads.
 - God cannot be worshipped with our eyes, ears, noses, hands or feet for those are bodily things, NOT spiritual.

3. To worship in "spirit and in truth" rules out people being the center of attraction in services.
 - Words/sermons from the preacher may be beautiful, touching, thrilling, beautifully accented and a well trained voice, but is not worship.
 - Beautiful hymns sung by a well-trained choir, that may move us to tears and stirs the heart is not worship.
 - Anywhere/anytime a person or people brings applause from the listeners, they are the focus of attention, NOT the Lord God.
 - The Lord God ONLY must be worshipped in spirit and truth.

4. To worship is the adoration of a redeemed people, occupied with THE LORD GOD, HIMSELF.
 - The unbeliever, the unsaved, the non-Christian knows nothing of being redeemed and therefore cannot worship in "spirit and in truth."
 - Israel learned how to worship God when they found themselves on the far shores of the Red Sea, having been delivered from slavery in Egypt.

5. Genuine, true worship is the new nature of the believer/Christian stirred into activity, turning to it's giver, the Lord God.
 - It is turning to the ONE who gave him/her eternal life.
 - It is the reborn/new heart crying out "*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift..*"
 - It is sinners who have been cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus exclaiming thanksgiving, consciously, deliberately and with purpose.

6. Remember the woman, Mary, who knelt at the feet of Jesus and anointed His feet with an expensive ointment, then wiped His feet with her hair? (*John 12:2-3*)
 - Mary didn't come to hear a sermon or sit at Jesus' feet nor to meet Jesus' disciples, nor to relax and rest after a week's work. NO!
 - Mary came with a purpose and that was to pour out upon Jesus that which she had long kept treasured up, the most valuable of her possessions.
 - She did not think about Simon who had once had leprosy, nor her sister Martha or her brother Lazarus, NO!
 - Jesus filled her thoughts and adoration and honor to Him, pouring out her heart's devotion to Him was her focus. **THAT IS GENUINE, TRUE WORSHIP!**

7. The focus, center, subject of worship is what is important.
 - The three wise men brought rich gifts to Jesus upon hearing of His birth.
 - **WORSHIP IS NOT COMING TO RECEIVE, BUT TO GIVE to the Lord God.**

8. The object, person of worship is the Lord God.
 - Why is there so little overflowing of the heart with spontaneous expressions of adoration so hard to see, hear or find in most "worship" services?
 - Could it be that most people are there for the wrong reason? To HEAR a great sermon, to HEAR the beautiful choir? To SEE their friends?

III. HINDRANCES TO GENUINE, TRUE WORSHIP

1. Many "worshippers" lack assurance.
 - They are not sure of their salvation, not sure of having been forgiven.
2. Many "worshippers" fail to judge themselves by God's Word and have come to "worship" all stained with unconfessed sin.
 - Aaron and the priests were required to cleanse themselves before entering the Holy place.
3. Many "worshippers" come to Church services filled with worldliness.
 - Their minds and hearts are preoccupied with things of the world rather than with the Lord God and their worship of Him.
 - *"This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me."*

CONCLUSION:

1. So now again, why are you here right now? To worship? Have you worshipped yet?
2. *"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth."*
 - *"I am the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."*
 - *"This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me.."*
3. Not everybody can worship the Lord God. Do you qualify according to the Lord God's qualification?
4. If you don't qualify to worship the Lord God, what are you going to do about it?