

# “It Begins With Me”

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## What Is Worship?

Dr. Tim Studstill  
Director, Music & Worship Ministry Team  
Baptist General Convention of Texas

### i. Prelude

- a. “[W]orship isn’t primarily about music, techniques, liturgies, songs, or methodologies. It’s about our hearts. It’s about what and who we love more than anything.” Bob Kauflin, Worship Matters
- b. Worship is a gift between lovers who keep on giving to each other. ...Giving and receiving form a circular pattern between God and the people of God, which defies comprehension and lasts forever. C. Welton Gaddy, The Gift of Worship
- c. If the essence of worship is satisfaction in God, then worship can't be done authentically as a means to anything else. You simply can't say to God, I want to be satisfied in you so that I can have something else. Because that would mean that you are not really satisfied in God but in that something else. And that would dishonor God, not worship him. John Piper, Pastor, Bethlehem Baptist Church, sermon November 16, 1997, “The Inner Essence of Worship”
- d. Worship always must be understood theologically rather than functionally. Worship is an end in itself. To attempt the worship of God for any other purpose than glorifying God compromises worship. Worship is not meant to promote an institution, to publicize a program, or to elevate any person but to exalt God. Worship is not a self-serving experience but a god-serving endeavor. C. Welton Gaddy, The Gift of Worship

### A. What Is Worship?

#### 1. Worship is action

*Weorthscipe* – a verb, to express appreciation, to adore, to love, and to praise

*Gottesdienst* – the union of what God has done for all persons and the services that congregations offer to God as worship

*Proskuneo* – “to kiss towards” or “to bow down,” humble adoration

*Latreuo* – rendering honor or paying homage

#### 2. Worship is Not...

- a. Worship is not the worship service.

- b. Worship is not the music.
- c. Worship is not everything we do.
- d. Worship is not going to church.

**B. Trends Impacting Worship Today - Culture**

- 1. Modern Thinking
  - a. rugged individualism
  - b. science and technology can eventually solve all our problems
  - c. process dictates results
  - d. truth is definable in absolute terms
- 2. Post-modern Thinking
  - a. the individual is a product of the community or several communities
  - b. science and technology can solve some problems, but intuition and instinct are important
  - c. pluralism of ideologies, cultures, traditions
  - d. there are no absolute truths

**C. Postmodern Worship**

- 1. relevant
- 2. honest
- 3. involvement
- 4. intimate
- 5. sensory
- 6. texture
- 7. emotion
- 8. reality
- 9. activity
- 10. vital

## **D. Worship Glorifies Christ - Worship and Evangelism**

### **1. Worship Precedes Evangelism**

- a. To discover God in worship is to desire to bear witness to the power and presence of God among folks who have not met God in worship.
- b. Worship is an activity strictly intended for serving God; what people experience in worship is essential for evangelism.
- c. Without worship, evangelism would be devoid of any content

### **2. Worship Pervades Evangelism**

- a. People live out day by day who (or what) they become in worship.
- b. Within a church, the gospel story is told time and time again to persons gathered in worship as well as to nonbelievers who are nonparticipants in worship; a church must tell and retell the story of Jesus to itself. That happens in worship.
- c. Worship keeps people's vision focused on God, a vision essential in the preservation of evangelism.

### **3. Worship Preserves Evangelism**

- a. Viewing evangelism from the perspective of divine worship preserves evangelism by protecting it from abuse and misuse.
- b. Worship keeps people's vision focused on God, a vision essential in the preservation of evangelism.
- c. The worship of God protects its participants from an infatuation with their own evangelistic skills.

### **4. Worship Participates in Evangelism**

- a. Generally, those churches which give the most emphasis to evangelism have the least appreciation for worship services that embrace the great themes of the Christian year.
- b. Worship themes based on the Christian calendar are among the most potent evangelistic statements available to the church.
- c. The dates on the Christian calendar introduce persons to the major events in the life of Jesus and dramatize the story of divine redemption and invites all people to become disciples of Jesus.
- d. The roots of evangelism in our time lie in new understandings of worship.

## E. Conclusion

Worship was the main event in the early church. Scripture says that the apostles and new believers devoted themselves to

*the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles...Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)*

### 1. Worship: The ultimate purpose of the church

*As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house . . . to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5*

*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood; a holy nation, a people belonging to God. . That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9*

### 2. Evangelism: Producing More and Better Worshipers

*Worship as the number-one function of the church seems to conflict with what we as evangelicals have always been taught. Isn't evangelism the main occupation and purpose of the church? How do we deal with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18, where Jesus commands us to... go and make disciples of all nations? " We are right to take Jesus' words very seriously-evangelism is not a suggestion; it is an imperative. However, it is significant that in John 4: 23, Jesus did not say that God is seeking evangelists. He said that God is seeking worshipers. And God seeks them from every tribe and every corner of the earth. Sally Morgenthaler*

- a. The Biblical goal of evangelism is to produce worshipers, not just to save the lost from the fires of hell or to enlist more recruits.
- b. One of the primary outcomes of the early church's commitment to worship was evangelism, the outreach often taking place within the worship service itself.

## F. Music in the New Church

*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. Psalm 92:1-2*

*O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. Psalm 95:1-3*

1. use music that is culturally relevant
2. use the people available
3. use resources and technology available
4. be open to old forms, hymns, and liturgies and craft them to fit the cultural environment
5. train church musicians

**G. Fling Wide the Doors! A final challenge:**

*To those of you who choose to begin the worship evangelism Odyssey, may you be blessed with a wisdom that is surpassed only by your gentleness of spirit. May you humbly and continually defer to the higher calling of worship on your lives. And may you fling wide the doors of your worship centers and sanctuaries so that the strangers outside your walls may finally taste and know the living God. Sally Morgenthaler*

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