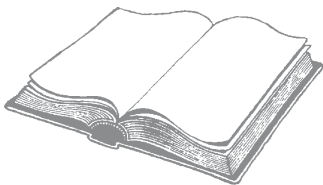


LET THE
BIBLE SPEAK...
about

WORSHIP



*Prove all things...
Hold fast to that which is good*

The New Testament speaks of three kinds of worship. First, there is ignorant worship. Paul describes the people at Mars Hill as worshipping ignorantly since they were bowing down to idols. (*Acts 17.22-31.*) Second, there is vain worship. This is worship that is useless or void since it is based on the teaching of men. Christ said, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" (*Matthew 15.9.*) And third, there is true worship. This is the kind that God wants. Christ stressed this when He said, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.*" (*John 4.24.*) Please notice that God is to be the object of our worship. Although he does not

force us to worship Him, if we choose to do so then we must worship Him in spirit and in truth. To worship Him in spirit means to worship Him with all sincerity and with the proper understanding. To worship Him in truth suggests that we must worship Him according to the teaching of the New Testament, which is truth. This is the only way our worship can be true and acceptable.

Since we must worship God in truth, then we must discover what the truth demands of us. And to discover this, we must turn to the New Testament itself. For surely if the Lord would have us to worship according to the truth, then He has revealed in the truth what He requires. Now in studying the New Testament, we learn that there are at least five distinct things or acts in which the early Christians engaged as worship to God.

1. They assembled to study God's word. In *Acts 20.7*, we have Paul preaching to the assembly. Christ taught that we should search

the scriptures. (*John 5.39.*) And Paul commanded Timothy to study. (*2 Timothy 2.15.*) Surely we could not picture a worship service without a period of Bible study. This is only right since it is God's way of speaking to us.

2. They assembled to pray to God. We read that the early Christians "...continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (*Acts 2.42.*) Since Paul said to pray without ceasing (*1 Thessalonians 5.17*), then this would surely include worship as well. And Christ taught that man should always pray. (*Luke 18.1.*) This is man's way of speaking to God and certainly we could not picture a worship service without including this part of it.

3. They assembled to sing praise to God. There are several verses to support this, but we'll consider the following one first: "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" (*Ephesians 5.19.*) Also

consider *Colossians 3.16*. Note too that there are two types of music: Vocal and Mechanical. In the scriptures the Lord designates vocal music as the type of music he wants in worship. *Hebrews 13.15* makes it plain that the Lord desires the fruits of our lips to praise Him rather than a cold, lifeless, heartless, mechanical instrument of music. Remember, it is the Lord that is to be pleased.

4. They assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper. In *Matthew 26.26-28*, Christ instituted this supper by saying that the bread represents His body and the cup represents his blood. Paul says in *1 Corinthians 11* that the Christian is to partake of the bread and the cup in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ. In *Acts 20.7*, we have an example of the early Christians meeting on the first day of the week to break bread. And in *Hebrews 10.25*, we are warned that we are not to forsake this assembly.

5. They assembled to give as they had been prospered. Paul exhorted the church

at Corinth, *"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."* (1 Corinthians 16.2.) Please keep in mind that they were to do this on the first day of the week and that they were to give as they had been prospered. No certain amount was set. It was a free will thing, but they were expected to give if they had prospered, and it was their duty to determine how much they had been prospered.

So this is what the scriptures reveal. The early Christians met each Lord's Day to worship in this manner. If we are Christians, can we do any less?



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