

The Challenges of Corporate Worship

Series: Following Jesus: Worship

Various Scriptures (0837)

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WORSHIP Human response to the perceived presence of the divine, a presence which transcends normal human activity and is holy. (Holman Bible Dictionary)

I. Two opposing dangers in corporate worship

a. Ignoring God while focusing on people

b. Ignoring people while focusing on God

c. The net effect of both

II. Clear distinctions that must be made

a. Distinguishing between opportunity and opponent

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 *TM Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!*

Acts 4:17-20 ¹⁷*But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.* ¹⁸*Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* ¹⁹*But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.* ²⁰*For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

b. Distinguishing between resistance and rejection

Romans 14:1, 13, 22 ¹Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. ... ¹³Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. ... ²²So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. (Regarding food and days)

1 Corinthians 8:9-13 ⁹Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹²When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

Matthew 18:6 ⁶But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

2 Samuel 6:12-23 David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. ... ¹⁴David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, ¹⁵while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts & the sound of trumpets. ¹⁶As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart. ... ²⁰When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" ²¹David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD'S people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. ²²I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor." ²³And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

TM I'll dance to God's glory... I'll gladly look like a fool... but among those maids you're so worried about, I'll be honored no end.

c. Distinguishing between anticipation and apprehension

1 Corinthians 14:23-25 TM If you come together as a congregation and some unbelieving outsiders walk in on you as you're all praying in tongues, unintelligible to each other and to them, won't they assume you've taken leave of your senses and get out of there as fast as they can? But if some unbelieving outsiders walk in on a service where people are speaking out God's truth, the plain words will bring them up against the truth and probe their hearts. Before you know it, they're going to be on their faces before God, recognizing that God is among you.

1 Corinthians 14:35 ...for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

d. Distinguishing between disorder and dismissal

1 Corinthians 14:33NIV For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. (TM) When we worship the right way, God doesn't stir us up into confusion; he brings us into harmony.