

Part 6: Corporate Worship

In the Greek: proskuneó: To worship, to bow down, to prostrate oneself.

Ephesians 4:15-16: but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Corporate worship transforms people of faith as they daily live out their new character and identity. Both new birth and adoption convey the reality of becoming part of a new family. Following Jesus requires a commitment to lay down all other preferences and take on a new identity as a living sacrifice. We are no longer our own, we have been bought with a price. We glorify God with all aspects of our lives. Becoming a member of this new body requires a total commitment to following God as new children.

Reflection:

23. What are two or three ways you have grown spiritually by worshiping and fellowshiping with other saints? How does this process make you more like Christ?

24. How does worship draw a congregation together?

Part 7: Baptized Life

Baptism does not end with conversion. Christians don't practice repetitions of baptism but believe baptism continually affects their lives. Paul emphasizes at least four effects or elements of baptism: a sign of the new covenant, the key to breaking sin's power, abiding relationship in Christ's body, and the testimony of the coming Resurrection and its conclusion with all corruption being put away.

Galatians 3:26-29 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Reflection:

25. How can the wonder of baptism continue to give you power over sin today? How have you seen someone else change in baptism? How do you respond to a returning backslider who asks to be baptized again?

26. What are some implications of being one baptized people? How might our unity in baptism prepare us to be peacemakers and offer the hope of unity to the world?

Part 8: Communion

When we partake of bread and cup, we commune with the first disciples who ate with Christ, as well as the untold millions who have done so since that time.

Mark 6:41-42: And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled.

Jesus _____ the Bread—Jesus receives what we bring to the table.

Jesus _____ Thanks—He blessed that which He received.

Jesus _____ the Bread—Christ's natural body suffered fracturing for the good of all the world. In communion we receive His brokenness.

Jesus _____ the Bread—Now He sends us to be shared with the world.

Reflection:

27. How would each of the four acts help you receive the body and blood of Christ? How does this make you more like Christ?

28. How do the four acts unify one body with one bread in their one purpose to make disciples in all of the world?

Final Reflection:

God's people have gathered in many different settings through the years. The apostles taught and led worship in schools, synagogues, houses, and in tentmaking workshops. Under oppression, churches worship in the wilderness or gather in small groups embedded in sporting events—where fans worshiped athletes, while disciples worshiped God. Workers join together during lunch breaks in factories to celebrate God's goodness. Saints worship graveside when they commit their loved ones to God. They hear the vows of new husbands and wives in worship so they can help them stay faithful to those vows in the future. They welcome new converts to the family by the riverside. By living in the Way together, they fellowship with one another, keep the apostles' doctrine, celebrate the Lord's Supper, and pray. Worship still results in signs and wonders, sharing resources, gladness, and favor with the people. How does our communities corporate worship, baptism directed living within the body, and communion line up with what God intended? How can we improve in these areas?

Practical Discipleship-Unity—For the next few weeks, get together with others of like precious faith—and whenever you do, focus on being part of one body. Don't get together with the church thinking only of your needs or struggles, but focus on His mission to edify the body. Try to be inclusive or invite newcomers.