

Come and Worship: Bow Your Knees
August 19, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

Come, let us sing to the Lord!

Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come to him with thanksgiving.

Let us sing psalms of praise to him.

For the Lord is a great God,

a great King above all gods.

Come, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for he is our God.

We are the people he watches over,

the flock under his care.

(Psalm 95:1-3, 6-7 NLT)

If we look at worship as it's described in the Book of Psalms, the ancient hymn book or worship guide for God's people, we discover it is meant to be interactive. That means we should be joining in through singing, making music, bringing offerings, standing in praise, and even dancing exuberantly! Interestingly, the most referenced posture in the Old Testament is bowing and kneeling. However, these days bowing and kneeling isn't something a lot of us do as a common practice. So why was it such an important part of early worship? Perhaps if we look to the actions of those early believers we will discover a few reasons why we may want to consider bowing our knees in worship.

Digging Deeper

We worship the Lord when we kneel in...

Repentance.

- Of course we can pray anywhere in any position, but the most commonly depicted image of prayer is that of someone on their knees with their eyes closed, hands folded and head bowed. So why do we kneel to pray? Well, one good reason would be because if we seek to follow the example of Jesus Christ, He Himself knelt in prayer at a critical moment of despair (see Luke 22:41). But also (if that isn't enough for you!) when we kneel we assume a lesser position. It is a position of respect or penitence. As Indiana Jones' daddy warned him as he wandered into a booby trapped cave in pursuit of the Holy Grail, "Only the penitent man shall pass!" Now when Indy realized he needed to kneel down, or humble himself before God, he narrowly escaped decapitation from a sharp blade flying at lightning speed toward his head. Most likely our kneeling down won't be required for the exact same reason, but it does demonstrate our penitence and reverence for our God who not only died for our sins but promises eternal life by His side if we only believe. Have you ever taken the time to think about why you get on your knees to pray? What does it signify for you? Is this how you were raised to pray? Or how you raised your children to pray?

Pursuit.

- In sports our kids are taught when someone gets hurt to “take a knee” until they get up or are carried off the field. Why do you think this is? It doesn’t help the injured player get up any faster. Asking players to hold that position means they're not moving, chattering, or doing anything else but showing their respect. It’s a sign that they are seeking only good things to happen for the fallen athlete. Similarly, when we kneel before God in worship, we are stopping all other activity as we earnestly pursue the good things the Lord has to offer. By bowing our knees, we are pleading for Christ to give us what only He can give. Have you considered kneeling in prayer to be a way of showing God you are pursuing Him with your undivided attention?

Submission.

- As mentioned previously, Jesus knelt in prayer at a critical time toward the end of His earthly life. He knew He was about to endure the worst pain and suffering imaginable to man. Even so, He chose to ignore His flesh and submit to the will of His Father. So how are we to submit to God, our Father? We must make this choice every day and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of renewing our minds so that we can be transformed into new works for Christ. God will use the situations of our lives to bring us the opportunity to submit to Him. How we respond is entirely up to us. Do you recognize the need to submit to the Lord in some area of your life? What blessings have you experienced as a result of prior submission to God’s will?

Conclusion

God is pleased and hears our prayers no matter how we pray. The important thing is that we come to Him with humility and authenticity, while conveying a spirit of thankfulness and reverence. But if we are thinking of our worship as a form of prayer, or deep connection with God, maybe we should take a hint from those early believers and go ahead and assume the position. As Scripture clearly indicates, one day, every knee will bow.

[Christ] was born as a man and became like a servant. And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was fully obedient to God, even when that caused his death—death on a cross. So God raised him to the highest place. God made his name greater than every other name so that every knee will bow to the name of Jesus—everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and bring glory to God the Father. (Philippians 2:7b-11 NCV)