

Ministry to God

Welcome/Prayer

Background

Passionate Worship is worship that is authentic, alive, creative, and comprehensible, where people experience the life-changing presence of God in the presence of others. Full participation of every worshiper is required.

1. Were you able to prepare for worship this week? If so, discuss how this affected your worship. If not, what are some steps you can take next week to prepare for worship?

Introduction

The most common Hebrew and Greek words (used in the Old and New Testaments) for worship describe service performed in the house of worship (i.e. tabernacle, temple). The best translation for what is done in worship is actually to minister or serve. After David brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16), it was to be placed inside a tent, or tabernacle. Read what action accompanied it:

“David appointed the following Levites to lead the people in worship before the Ark of the Lord – to invoke his blessings, to give thanks, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel.” (1 Chronicles 16:4 NLT)

So real worship is service or ministry. But what kind of ministry? A pattern seems to emerge that is summarized by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:26.

“When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide insight.” (*The Message*)

This verse suggests worship consists of three distinct types of ministry: ministry to God (hymns or songs), ministry of the Word (instruction, revelation, insight, story-telling), and ministry to one another (prayer, doing something useful, building up the church).

1. How does viewing worship as a ministry change your approach to worship?

Break It Down

Paul mentions that ministry to God primarily consists of the singing of hymns or songs. Read 1 Chronicles 16:7-36. Once the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the tabernacle, David and the priests ministered to the Lord by singing a song of thanksgiving. From this action, we discover ministry to God requires each of us to do our **P.A.R.T.**

1) Praise

One of the reasons David appointed priests to lead the people in worship was “to praise the Lord” (v. 4). Why are we to give praise to the Lord? Because He deserves it.

Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim his greatness. Let the whole world know what he has done. Sing to him; yes, sing his praises. Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds. (1 Chronicles 16:8-9 NLT)

1. What praise song has special meaning to you?
2. What is it about music that allows us to give God our thanks and praise?

Praise is talking *about* God in a way that proclaims His character and extols His actions.

Some of the forms of praise that are shown in worship are hymns, choruses, shouts of joy, special music, statements of faith (i.e., Apostle’s Creed), and testimonies. Whenever we enter into praise, we create a positive atmosphere that is attractive to others. Yet, sometimes, our praise appears a bit “over the top.”

3. Describe a time when you witnessed people showing “over the top” behavior, whether it be at a worship service, sporting event, or somewhere else.
4. How do we, as a church, create a worship environment that is positive and attractive to others and at the same time make praising God our priority?

Right before the worship took place in the tabernacle, David danced mightily before the Lord. His wife didn’t think it was proper behavior (1 Chronicles 15:29b). However, God liked it and blessed David for it.

5. What might hinder someone from showing outward praise to God during a public worship service?
6. What are ways to overcome these hindrances and enter into a time of thanksgiving and praise?

2) Adoration

If praise is talking *about* God, adoration is talking *to* God.

Instead of telling others what we think about the Lord, we’re letting Him know directly through songs or prayers of adoration how we feel. We change our speech from saying “he and his” to “you and yours.”

“Let all that I am praise the Lord. O Lord my God, how great you are! You make...you provide...you cause...I will praise my God.” Excerpts from Psalm 104- a song of adoration.

While anyone can sing about God, speaking directly to Him requires a relationship. It is not only an intellectual relationship, but it is also an emotional one. It is an intensely personal and intimate relationship. God shouted for all the world to hear, “I love you!” when He sent His Son to die for our sins. Now He sits and waits for our reply. Get to know the Lord, spend time talking with Him, and ask God to reveal Himself to you in a real, personal way.

1. What are some ways to show another person you love him/her?
2. How can those actions or thoughts be directed towards God?

3) Repentance

This element of ministering to the Lord is alluded to in David’s song: “Worship the Lord in all His holy splendor. Let all the earth tremble before Him.” (1 Chronicles 16:29-30 NLT)

The One whom we praise and adore is altogether holy and pure and righteous, but we are sinners and fall short of the glory of God. In Psalm 101:6, God says, “The one whose walk is blameless will minister to me.” It is only through repentance that we can fulfill this requirement.

Our part of the equation is to confess our sins to God and turn from them. In response, God promises to forgive and make us blameless in His sight.

“If we confess our sins to [God], He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” (1 John 1:9 NLT)

Whenever we enter into worship, we must reflect upon our lives and assess if there is anything in our speech or conduct that is contrary to God’s will and ways. This can be through songs of repentance or prayers of confessions. But oftentimes it occurs spontaneously as we see ourselves in light of a holy God.

1. Describe a time during a worship service when you were able to confess your sin to God. How did it enhance your worship?
2. Which method of repentance is most meaningful to you (song, prayers, or other methods)?

4.) Thanksgiving

The primary reason David appointed certain persons to minister in worship was to praise the Lord and give Him thanks.

Discussion Guide: *Ministry to God*, a message from Lynn Haven United Methodist Church

“Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim his greatness.” (1 Chronicles 16:8a NLT)

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good...So we can thank your holy name and rejoice and praise you.” (1 Chronicles 16:34-35 NLT)

So whenever we do our part and give thanks through our songs, prayers of gratitude, sharing of praises, or by bringing an offering to further His work, it is like we are presenting the Lord with a “thank you” note.

1. What are some ways you have given thanks to God?.

Conclusion

Passionate worship that enables us to experience the life-changing presence of the Lord begins with ministry to God. Just as David appointed certain Levites to be “ministers before the Ark of the Lord,” you have been appointed to be “ministers” in worship. Read aloud the word of the Lord, spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“You will be called priests of the Lord, ministers of our God.” (Isaiah 61:6 NLT)

We are all priests or ministers and we all have a PART to play.

Close In Prayer

Pray that we might experience truly passionate worship at Lynn Haven.