

relationship is illustrated by the experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The Scripture describes the fellowship between God and Adam as a direct relationship: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. . . . And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:8-9). Adam recognized the presence of God, but his disobedience made him uncomfortable and caused him to hide.

Since unforgiven sin causes the offender to be uncomfortable in the presence of God, the next step in worship after the invocation should be the confession and removal of sin. Appropriate Scriptures which state the need of confession and the promise of forgiveness are: Leviticus 26:40; Deuteronomy 4:29; 30:1-3, 8-10; 1 Kings 8:33-50; 2 Chronicles 7:14; and Nehemiah 1:9. The Psalms are rich in expressions of repentance and pleas for forgiveness. Perhaps the best known is Psalm 51. Other relevant scripture passages include Proverbs 9:6; 28:13; Isaiah 22:12; 44:22; and Jeremiah 3:12. The prophets frequently called the people to repentance and promised God's mercy in return. Likewise, Jesus admonished His hearers to repent for the Kingdom of God was at hand.

God's Word calls man to repentance and promises His mercy; man's proper response is confession and petition for forgiveness. The words of numerous hymns appropriately express man's repentance and confession of sin and God's declaration of pardon. Often hymns which call to repentance are reserved for the invitation (such as "Jesus is Tenderly Calling," "Softly and Tenderly," and "Christ Receiveth Sinful Men"), but they may be used also in the first part of the service which emphasizes preparation. God's grace in forgiving sins (including Christ's sacrifice on the cross) and man's response of commitment to his Lord who has forgiven him are described in hymns like "Beneath the Cross of Jesus," "Amazing Grace," and "Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed."

If the worshipper has been led through the steps of preparation, he is then ready to respond to God's grace by offering his possessions and life to his Saviour.

### Presentation

Although the steps in preparation for worship involve both the revelation of God and the response of man, the emphasis is on God. The recognition of His love and grace in Christ who died for man's sin and the experience of being forgiven and cleansed of sin result in the worshipper's desire to present himself as a living sacrifice to God's service (see Rom. 12:1-2). The response of the worshipper to God's grace should not be delayed until the invitation. If the worshipper has been led to a willingness to offer his life to God's service, the sermon can become

*Sin is a barrier to man's fellowship with \_\_\_\_\_ . Therefore, what should follow the invocation? \_\_\_\_\_*

*(God, call to penitence)*

*Draw lines from the two parties in the dialogue of the call to penitence to their proper roles.*

*God*

*1. confesses and petitions for forgiveness*

*Man*

*2. calls for repentance and promises mercy*

*(God--2, man--1)*

*Man's willingness to give himself as a living sacrifice to God should result from recognition of God's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ and from the experience of being \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of sin.*

*(Love, grace, forgiven, cleansed)*

God's Word of instruction for him. Too often the Word of instruction in the sermon is given to those who are not prepared spiritually to follow it.

*Presentation of possessions.*—In the very beginning, Cain and Abel offered sacrifices of the fruit of the ground and the flock. God accepted the gift of righteous Abel, who offered in faith, but rejected Cain's offering. This first act of worship demonstrates that offerings are essential to establishing a relationship with the heavenly Father. The primary means of worship throughout the Old Testament was the offering of animal sacrifices. In addition cereal and money offerings were presented to God by bringing them to the Temple.

For the offering to be acceptable, the heart of the offerer must be right. A person does not tithe to obligate God to bless him but rather because God has blessed him. Withholding gifts from God does not incur His wrath so much as it reveals a person's wrong spirit which does incur God's wrath. God was not pleased with the many sacrifices being offered in the day of Isaiah because the hearts of the people were far from Him. Their sinful lives made their offerings unacceptable (see Isa. 1:10-20).

In the New Testament Church, gifts of money replaced animal sacrifices. The monetary gifts of the Philippians were "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18b, RSV).

Preceding the offering, the minister may read a brief scripture passage concerning giving. The receiving of the offering should be in the spirit of dedication of life and possessions rather than a demonstration of the pastor's ability to get money from the people. The best example of giving is Christ who gave His life on the cross. Another example of similar dedication is that of the poor widow who cast into the treasury of the Temple "two mites which make a farthing" (Mark 12:41-44). The amount was small when compared with the gifts of the wealthy, but it was "all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:44). Jesus was inspired by her act of dedication which demonstrated her faith that God would take care of her. Jesus arose after seeing this act of commitment and gave His life on the cross for the woman and other sinners like her. Giving of money which represents the necessities of life is one of man's responses to God's mercy and sacrificial love.

Appropriate scripture passages to read before the offering are: Genesis 14:20 in which Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek; Genesis 28:22 in which Jacob vowed a tenth of all his property to God; and passages from the Mosaic law relating to the tithe. Tithing was customary in New Testament times (see Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:41; 18:12); therefore, the New Testament does not implore the people to adopt it as a method of spiritual service.

Offerings are essential to the establishment of a relationship with the

\_\_\_\_\_.

(heavenly Father)

Are these statements true or false?

1. A person tithes to obligate God to bless him. \_\_\_\_\_
2. A person tithes because God has blessed him. \_\_\_\_\_

(1. false, 2. true)

List some appropriate Scriptures for reading before the offering.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Passages setting forth instructions for giving are also appropriate (see Matt. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:11-14; 9:6-7). Additional Scriptures may be located in topical Bibles under the subjects of alms, beneficence, and liberality.

*Presentation of needs.*—The pastoral prayer may precede or follow the presentation of gifts. It usually consists of the following: (1) adoration and thanksgiving; (2) acknowledgement of sinfulness; (3) petition for the things desired according to the will of God; (4) intercession for those beyond the assembled group; and (5) submission to the will of God. If confession has been emphasized in an earlier part of the service, it need not be magnified in the pastoral prayer; however, most prayers begin with a recognition of God's greatness and an acknowledgement of man's unworthiness. The prayer should be planned in order that it will be specific with regard to needs and individuals.

**Proclamation**

*The sermon.*—Modern preaching has its precedent in the proclamation of the prophets; however, not all sermons can be classified as "the Word from the Lord." Sometimes men speak their own words and base them on a humanistic philosophy. The Old Testament prophet was qualified to speak the Word of the Lord only when the power of the Spirit came upon him to reveal God's Word. The words of the prophet were recorded in the Bible and have come to us today as the revealed Word of God. However, before the contemporary preacher is able to communicate them as God's Word, he must be guided by the Holy Spirit even as the prophets of old. Too often the modern sermon is only the partial Word of God—presenting hope but ignoring doom—and the spiritual diet becomes bland and ceases to be significantly appealing to the worshipper.

For the sermon to fulfil its role as the Word of God, it must be based on the Bible and be accurate in its interpretation of Scripture. The best preaching is expository in which a passage is explained and applied to contemporary life. If the preacher faithfully proclaims the written Word of God under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the message becomes the living and relevant Word of God. The Holy Spirit makes the message God's Word (revelation) to His people. The next step in worship is the response of the people.

*The invitation.*—The time of invitation is designed to encourage persons to respond actively to God's Word which has been proclaimed. An evangelistic decision is not the only type which should be expected. If the Word of God has been that of warning to the unrepentant, the invitation should emphasize repentance and belief in Christ. Numerous hymns on this subject are included in

Where may additional scripture references be found? \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answer with the text.)

List four parts of the pastoral prayer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The sermon becomes the Word of God when the preacher is guided by the \_\_\_\_\_.

(Holy Spirit)

In order for the sermon to be the Word of God, it must be based on the \_\_\_\_\_ and be accurate in its \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture.

(Bible, interpretation)

What is the purpose of the invitation? \_\_\_\_\_

(to encourage active response to God's Word)

most hymnals. Since the majority of those in a worship service are Christians, the Word of God in the sermon may not be specifically evangelistic but addressed to disciples. The expected response from believers should be commitment to the will of God. Genuine decisions are not always made publicly.

As the pastor plans the service, he should remember that this response of the people to the Word of God is part of the dialogue of worship, and he should plan his invitations in such a way as to give them opportunity to respond. Worship is incomplete unless all respond either publicly or privately to the proclaimed Word of God. Oftentimes people need instruction before they are able to carry out their decisions.

**Dedication**

In a usual worship service, only a few of the persons attending normally make public decisions. Others may respond privately, but the danger is that the majority, although they agree with the message, will depart without vowing to put the message into effect in their lives. Before the benediction and dismissal of the congregation, the people may be given opportunity to affirm their faith and to pledge their lives to the carrying out of the truths emphasized in the Word of God. A brief Scripture or statement of affirmation could be printed in the worship programme, and the people could be invited to express together their intention of putting the gospel into practice. For example, if the sermon has emphasized involvement in missions or witnessing, the dedication could be as follows:

*Word:*

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” (John 4:35b)

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isa. 6:8a)

*Response:*

“Then said I, Here am I; send me.” (Isa. 6:8b)

The response gives the people opportunity to face up to the central truth of the message and to affirm their commitment to act on that truth.

**The benediction**

The benediction commends the assembled worshippers to God’s care and announces His blessings on them. It is an important and proper climax to worship. “It should gather up the attitudes expressed in the worship service and should be offered to God as a commitment of the congregation to go forth into the world to carry out

*The invitation should be directed towards the \_\_\_\_\_ (evangelistic decision) and \_\_\_\_\_ (discipleship decision) (non-Christian, Christian)*

---

*Is this statement true or false?  
All decisions are not necessarily made publicly. \_\_\_\_\_ (true)*

---

*The dedicatory part of the service gives the worshippers the opportunity to face up to the truths of the m \_\_\_\_\_ and to commit themselves to a \_\_\_\_\_ on its truths. (message, act)*

His will.”<sup>3</sup> Scriptural benedictions are appropriate and may be found in Numbers 6:24-26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 3:20-21; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 5:10-11; Jude 24-25; and Revelation 22:21.<sup>4</sup>

### Suggestions for the Leader of Worship

The alert pastor may profit from using manuals on orders of worship prepared by various denominations. Ministers of free churches do not normally desire to be restricted to the liturgical order of service, but ministers' manuals provide numerous helpful suggestions in planning services as dialogues between God and man. Worship services should be formal enough, as a result of planning, to insure that the worshippers are led into an encounter with God rather than being just a period of entertainment based on the performance of the preacher. Few preachers are skilled enough as entertainers to compete with the professionals of television. Church attendance declines when the people go away empty, when they do not encounter God in worship. The skill of the preacher and the uniqueness of his message are insufficient to draw people to the house of God.

Worship involves action which expresses the inner attitudes of the worshipper. Worship as an act of presenting oneself to God in praise and thanksgiving is an unfolding drama. The leader is not to conclude, however, that he has to be dramatic. Dignity, reverence, and sincerity are necessary characteristics for providing a worshipful atmosphere. The leader should avoid mannerisms and activities which attract attention.

The roles of a leader in worship include both those of priest and prophet. The priest approaches God on behalf of man and makes offerings for man's sins. The prophet speaks forth the Word of God. As priest, the pastor is acting in behalf of the people and not for himself alone. To be spiritually prepared to lead the people, he must have entered the presence of God himself. His desire must be to exalt God and subordinate himself. If he is aware of God's presence, he will reveal an attitude characterized by reverence, joy, hope, expectancy, and humility.

Suitable attire for the pastor does not call attention to itself. Ministers of the free churches usually wear the same style of clothing as that worn by the laity. If a business suit is worn, it is normally a dark colour. In some churches a robe is acceptable in the pulpit. Other churches object to the clerical robe because it tends to make a distinction between the minister and the congregation.

<sup>3</sup> Segler, *Christian Worship*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for a sample order of worship.

<p><i>The leader of worship should seek to lead the worshippers into an encounter with _____.</i></p> <p><i>(God)</i></p>
<p><i>Worship expresses the inner a _____ of the worshipper. It is an act of presenting oneself to God in p _____ and t _____.</i></p> <p><i>(attitude, praise, thanksgiving)</i></p>
<p><i>List the two roles of a leader of worship.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p><i>(priest, prophet)</i></p>
<p><i>Underline the correct word or words.</i></p> <p><i>Suitable attire for the pastor (does/does not) call attention to itself.</i></p> <p><i>(Compare your answer with the text.)</i></p>

The minister's manner before the congregation should be dignified but not stiff and formal. He should sit and stand erectly instead of sprawling in the pulpit chair and across the pulpit desk. He should walk naturally to the pulpit and address the congregation in a normal voice, without a "preacher's tone." Adequate preparation leads to greater poise and self confidence which will enable him to choose precise words and to avoid awkward expressions. He must avoid mannerisms which attract attention and distract from worship. Placing his hands in his pockets, adjusting his glasses frequently, making unusual facial expressions, and looking at the ceiling and walls or through the windows are to be shunned. To prevent his staring vacantly into space, the speaker may select individuals at various places in the congregation and make eye contact with them. He should see individuals and not masses of faces. This practice will give the appearance of looking directly at each individual in the congregation. It will enable him to speak directly to individuals, and it will improve his communication.

The spirit of the leader is very important since he communicates through his attitude as well as through his words. If he is despondent and pessimistic, he will be unable to communicate a message of hope and victory. His real faith and confidence in the promises of God are reflected through his attitude.

The timing of the service is important. The pastor should be punctual in beginning the service, never allowing it to begin late. Care should be taken not to prolong the time involved in making announcements concerning activities for the week. A mimeographed or printed bulletin listing the activities will relieve the necessity of extensive verbal explanations.

The people should be trained to participate in worship. Some pastors conduct worship services with minimal involvement of the people who become passive observers. Leaders of church renewal movements emphasize the need of more participation in worship by the people. Many pastors understand "conducting the worship service" to mean they should do everything—read Scripture, pray, preach. The pastor should lead the people in worship rather than conduct a service for them. Laymen may be used in leading the various parts of the service. They can contribute by ushering, preparing the building, taking the offering, and distributing the printed order of worship. They may also lead prayers, read Scriptures, and give personal testimonies. The congregation participates through singing, sharing in responsive scripture readings, giving, and listening to the Word of God. Listening should be active instead of passive; the active listener responds to what he hears. The worshipper should be taught to do more than simply listen to the words of the

List some distracting habits of speakers.

---



---



---

(Compare your answers with the text.)

A spiritual leader communicates through his a \_\_\_\_\_ as well as his w \_\_\_\_\_.

(attitudes, words)

To conduct a worship service means the leader does e \_\_\_\_\_, with minimal involvement of the people who become o \_\_\_\_\_.

To lead a worship service means to involve the worshippers in the service by their p \_\_\_\_\_.

(everything, observers; participation)

one leading the prayer; he should be encouraged to make the words his own thoughts.

### The Renewal of Worship

Much concern is being expressed concerning the survival of the modern church. When compared to the early, dynamic church of the apostles, the modern church appears lifeless and powerless. Two trends are being followed in renewal efforts: (1) liturgical churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, are diligently studying the possible revision of the liturgy—its origin, meaning, and relevance for the contemporary world; (2) free churches consider renewal to be dependent on a new design of the church and on new activities. A healthier discussion centres in the relation of worship and mission. The pastor is challenged to plan the kind of worship service that leads to involvement in mission service. Missions should not be limited to Christian ministry in another country. It is carrying Christ's gospel into any part of the world, even one's own community.

Since worship is to become aware of the presence of God and to express adoration, thanksgiving, and dedication to Him, renewal of worship depends upon an awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Instead of restructuring its programmes, substituting modern music for traditional hymns, and belittling the institutional church, the people of God should concentrate on living by faith in order to relate to the Divine. The presence of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the Sunday morning worship service, but the believer is to "walk in the Spirit." He is to serve daily under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; this is his "reasonable service" (spiritual worship).

In an age of scientific progress and materialism, even the devout find it difficult to believe in the promise of God that He will be present constantly with His people. Just as Jesus could not do many mighty works in His own country because of the peoples' unbelief (Matt. 13:58), neither can the power of God be experienced widely today because men are depending on themselves and their own accomplishments. The way to renewal is by appropriating spiritual power through faith rather than continuing to rely on human accomplishments for spiritual achievements. When God's people seek to worship, they must believe. To believe means to expect an encounter with God even as He has promised in His Word.

Worship fails for two reasons. In the first place, people are not taught how to worship. Theologically, pastors themselves fail to accept with confidence the promises of God. Jesus promised that where two or three are gathered in His name, He will be in their midst. Pastors need to accept this promise without wavering, instead of

A true worship experience should lead to involvement in \_\_\_\_\_ service which includes taking the gospel to the worshipper's own \_\_\_\_\_.

(mission, community)

Mark with an X the correct statement.

- \_\_\_ 1. Spiritual renewal comes with reliance on human accomplishments.
- \_\_\_ 2. Spiritual renewal is achieved by appropriating spiritual power through faith.

(X-2)

Worship often fails because people are not taught how \_\_\_\_\_.

(to worship)

“hoping” that He will be present. The doubts of the pastor are unconsciously communicated to the congregation. He must remember that God’s promise is to be present with His people. A life of sin and a lack of faith blind men to His presence. Confession of sin and receiving of forgiveness from God must result in a willingness to forgive one’s fellow-man. The willingness of Christians to forgive one another is basic in the development of a fellowship of love (active concern for the well-being of one another). A church which experiences a loving fellowship worships and knows the reality of God’s presence. Such a church reflects its inner life of love to the community to which it ministers; it is a missionary church.

Secondly, worship fails because it has been separated from life and work. Attention is again called to Paul’s statement in Romans 12:1 “that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (spiritual worship).” Worship in the Old Testament centred in the offering of sacrifices, but in the New Testament it centred in serving. In discussing vocation, Martin Luther refused to make a sharp distinction between sacred and secular work. He considered that all work which serves one’s fellow-man is the will of God. By serving his fellow-man through his vocation, man expresses his love, devotion, and obedience to God. Devotion and obedience to God are worship. Worship cannot be separated from one’s vocation.

Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples of every creature as they go into all the world. The faithful who worship God express their devotion in obedience to His command. Those who walk with an awareness of His presence find that witnessing is a joy. It is not an undesirable task which they are compelled to carry out, but it is an experience which the early apostles expressed in the words, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). Without genuine worship, personal witnessing and mission service become distasteful tasks; after genuine worship, they become joyful and impelling activities.

*Worship also fails sometimes because it has been kept separate from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(life, work)*

*What can make personal witnessing and mission service joyful and impelling activities?*

*(genuine worship)*

## Home Study Exercise

**Basic assignment** (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide content, answer the following questions.

1. Give a general principle to follow in developing a unified plan for worship. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What themes for worship are suggested by (1) Advent \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) Christmas \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Lenten \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) Easter \_\_\_\_\_ (5) Pentecost \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why may church worship be described as dialogue? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. According to Winward's plan for worship as dialogue, how does God speak? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the purpose of a call to worship? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Suggest two combinations of Scriptures and hymns that could be used for calls to worship. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the purpose of the prayer of invocation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Why should the call to penitence follow the invocation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. State the two parts of the dialogue in the call to penitence. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How does the preparation part of the service get the worshippers ready for the presentation of offerings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How essential is offering in worship? \_\_\_\_\_
12. List four parts of the pastoral prayer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. When can the sermon be called the Word of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Should an evangelistic or discipleship emphasis be given during the invitation? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is the purpose of the dedicatory (closing) part of the service? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
16. What should the leader of worship strive to achieve? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What is the two-fold role of the leader in worship? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
18. List three habits of the preacher which distract from worship and should be avoided. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
19. Distinguish between conducting worship for the people and leading the people in worship. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
20. How should planned worship relate to service or mission involvement? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
21. Why does worship often not lead to spiritual power today? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
22. List two reasons worship fails. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Supplementary assignment** (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 151–156 and 163–168 in *The Church Book* by Dobbins and answer the following questions.

1. What are two extremes in orders of worship which hinder church worship?
2. Name five habits which hinder worship.
3. What is the proper question for the sincere worshipper to express?
4. What physical symbols are useful in worship?
5. List five rules a leader of worship should follow.
6. Explain the difference between objective and subjective worship.

**Advanced assignment** (Level 3). Read pages 185–210 in *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice* by Segler and answer the following questions.

1. How much time should be spent in planning a Sunday morning worship service?
2. What procedures may a pastor follow in providing variety and purpose in the worship service?
3. Name the five stages involved in the natural process of the soul's worshipping, and plan a complete order of worship for a morning service.
4. List the steps the leader should take in preparing for worship.
5. Describe the influence of the leader's spirit and attitude on the service.
6. Distinguish between church renewal and liturgical renewal.

## **Seminar Discussion**

1. Consider the statement, "A church which is reaching lost people has vital worship services." Is effective evangelism the source of effective worship, or is effective worship the source of effective evangelism?
2. Should laymen be enlisted for leadership in parts of the worship service, or should the trained pastor assume most of the responsibility? Be prepared to defend your answer.
3. How important is the sermon to the success of the worship service?
4. How do you think the Church can be renewed today?
5. Outline an order of worship and state the purpose of each step.