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1 • *The Pastor*

WHO, MORE THAN THE MINISTER, touches people in their most solemn and sacred moments? Whether he is asked to dedicate a baby, unite young adults in marriage, counsel a hurting father or bury an aged saint, the pastor has the holy privilege of ministering the grace of Christ Jesus to those he lives among. Therefore:

The pastor must see to his spirit. He must keep the fires of devotion to his God burning brightly. The Word must be his delight and prayer his chief business. Only as he keeps in contact with the Throne can he be God's emissary.

He must avoid empty professionalism—the bane of every minister—at all cost. His ministry is important to those who look to him for help; it must be important to him, too.

In his concern for the household of God, the pastor must not neglect his own household. If he has a wife, the marriage vows he mediates to others are the vows he himself took. If he has children, they are as sacred a trust as any other in his parish—and more so because the responsibility is uniquely his.

The pastor should be careful about his personal appearance. Cleanliness may not be next to godliness, but it ranks nearby. Whatever the limitations of his wardrobe, his clothes should enhance the dignity of his calling. Nothing on or about him should clamor for attention.

The minister must also have the proper manner. Gravity need not be gloom, and seriousness is not necessarily sadness. The pastor's manner will reflect the importance of the occasion. The King's business calls for a kingly bearing. Quiet reserve is always the mark of a Christian man. The pastor should act in such a way that no one will ever regret having sought his assistance. Manner is the sum total of manners.

Those who are called by Jesus Christ to His ministry are called to be good ministers. No man could be more. Who dares to be less?

2 • *The Worship Service*

THE WORSHIP SERVICE CREATES an atmosphere where individual believers interact with a transcendent God within a covenant community. Worship forms may vary with cultures or generations, but the content remains unchanged. At least four principles regulate the content of the worship service.

1. *Worship is not something we attend; it is something we do. It is a corporate gathering to exalt our worthy God for His mighty acts of salvation.* True worship, therefore, is participative. We gather not primarily to receive but to give. Worship is a heart attitude to be expressed in word and act. It is larger than any of the individual elements of the worship service. It is all the facets of the service in relation to the hearts of the worshipers.

2. *What we do in worship must be grounded in the Scriptures.* The Bible is our only rule of faith and practice. Both Old and New Testaments serve as authority and source for our times of worship. From these sacred sources we glean psalms, hymns, doxologies, benedictions, confessions, prayers, ascriptions of glory and patterns of worship.

3. *What we do in worship must always be oriented toward Christ—particularly in His redemptive work.* The early Church centered its preaching and worship in what we call the *kerygma*—the proclamation of Christ—His birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension. Worship praises God the Father for this redemption in Jesus Christ His Son and reenacts it in the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

4. *The forms of our worship are rooted in both the Jewish temple/synagogue and in the early Church.* Our worship comprises both the commonality of those forms and their distinctives. Our worship is rooted in the liturgy and pagentry of temple worship, but also in the spontaneity of the early Church. Worship is both sacramental and free.

AN ORDER FOR “FREE” WORSHIP

Preparation: As worshipers arrive, they may be given intercessory suggestions for quiet prayer. Worship choruses may be sung spontaneously or under a leader’s direction. If spontaneously, bear in mind that visitors unfamiliar with the songs may feel estranged. Printed Scriptures help each worshiper focus on a particular theme for the worship time.

Worshipers may be called to self-examination and personal confession through the use of a hymn (sung or unsung), the naming of one of God’s attributes or a specific Scripture.

Hymns of praise: Psalms set to music or Scripture songs may be committed to memory and sung. Hymns may be announced or spontaneously begun by the leader or worshipers. Both the Scripture songs and the hymns should point worshipers to God and His activity and attributes.

Scripture: Scriptures may be assigned to members of the congregation to read—or they may be read spontaneously. If assigned, use the whole Bible—Psalms and other Old Testament portions and passages from the Gospels, the Acts and the Letters. Members may be asked to quote memorized Scriptures that call attention to some aspect of the person and work of Christ Jesus.

The worship leader may wish to acknowledge that these Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, demanding our undivided attention. They have the power of

God through the Holy Spirit to convey truth, correction and the assurance of eternal life.

Intercessory prayer: The pastor may lead the congregation in prayer for needs within the local fellowship of believers and ministries around the world. He may on occasion call on any who so desire to offer spontaneous prayers. Or he may lead a time of directed prayer, asking people to pray silently or audibly for specific needs, which he announces one by one. But remember, for the initiated, directed prayer can be an effective change of pace; for strangers, it can be awkward and meaningless.

Offering: The offering, frequently regarded by pastor and congregation as an interruption, should be seen rather as an important part of congregational worship. Even as the members present themselves to God in His sanctuary, so they present their offerings—the fruit of their daily labor—as a love gift to God and His kingdom work. An offering receptacle positioned so worshipers may place their gifts as they enter the sanctuary is customary in some churches. But certainly the corporate reception of tithes and offerings at a given point in the worship service can and should be a fitting act of worship. On occasion, the offering may be placed after the sermon as a congregational response to God's Word.

Sermon: Several elements may be incorporated into the preparation for the Word or the declaration of the Word, including drama, storytelling or media aids such as slides, videos or graphics. The communications revolution which has moved from the ancient method of oral presentation to the contemporary availability of audiovisual aids permits a broad assortment of tools to be employed in the presentation of God's Word. There can be no substitute, however, for anointed preaching with power.

Response: Every sermon should call for some listener response. The audience may be given opportunity

to respond in a variety of ways, but each worshiper should be specifically challenged to respond.

An evangelistic sermon should be followed by an invitation to repent and confess Christ publicly as Savior and Lord. The appropriate response may be to personal commitment, with an invitation to the worshipers to demonstrate right then their assent. Depending on the sermon theme, the response may be to write a note of encouragement to someone, to attend or join a prayer group, to make a faith promise to missions or to read privately some portion of Scripture.

The Lord's Table: If communion is to be observed, it is appropriate to schedule it as a part of the response. (See chapter 3, "Communion.")

Close: A hymn or Scripture song in keeping with the theme of the service, followed possibly by a benediction, will fitly conclude the worship time.

AN ORDER FOR MORE FORMAL WORSHIP

Preparation: Scriptures may be included in the printed Order of Worship for meditation before the service formally begins. An appropriate prelude of hymns and gospel songs will help to set the tone of the service. A painting, banners, projected pictures or other non-verbal forms of communication may be used to focus the attention of the worshipers.

Announcements: These should not be considered unimportant. Rather the participatory events which the announcements describe are often the sinews that bind the body together.

Call to worship: The choir may call the congregation to worship through music, or the pastor or worship leader may do so with an appropriate Scripture or by

leading the congregation in a unison or responsive reading of a printed declaration.

Hymn of praise: The opening hymn should speak to the nature or attributes of God and should be addressed to Him.

Ascriptions of praise: These may be personal, planned witness statements, or the pastor may use Scripture selections in keeping with the theme of the day. The congregation may sing the *Gloria*.

Prayer of invocation: This may be a Scripture invocation (see following pages) or a brief prayer in the pastor's own words invoking the manifest presence of God in the worship experience. On occasion, individuals within the congregation may be asked in advance to voice brief invocations.

Old Testament Scripture: The pastor or lay leader will choose a passage supportive of the theme of the worship service.

Music: A choral anthem or other special music may be included at this point.

Offering: Worshipers are given opportunity to present their tithes and offerings to God. An instrumental or vocal ministry may accompany the reception of the offering.

Doxology and prayer of dedication

New Testament Scripture: The pastor or lay leader will read a New Testament passage supportive of the day's worship theme.

Pastoral prayer: The pastoral prayer is opportunity for the minister, in his role of priest, to bear before God the praise of his people as well as to intercede for those members with particular needs. Conscientiously carried out, it can be a highlight of the service and a lasting benediction for the worshipers.

Special music: A song well executed and appropriate to the theme of the service can prepare the congregation for what follows and permit the pastor a brief time of quiet before he stands to minister the Word to his people.

Sermon

Response: The response may be a corporate recitation of the Apostles' Creed, a litany prepared and printed in the bulletin or an invitation to a public confession of faith or of dedication. A public witness, asked for well in advance, supportive of the sermon theme, may be offered by a member of the congregation. Some churches might even use drama to act out the response in life situations.

Hymn of affirmation**Prayer of thanksgiving**

Charge: The pastor, in his charge to the congregation, may repeat the major theme of the worship time.

Benediction: See the end of this chapter for a collection of benedictions.

Postlude: The congregation may sing a chorus, or the organist may play a selection.

HELPS FOR WORSHIP

Use of color in worship services: Throughout history, worship has been associated with symbols—crosses, altar Bibles, center pulpits, communion tables. Likewise, colors traditionally have been used to set the mood of the worship service. Colors that take on significance in the Christian calendar include:

Violet, the color used by kings in mourning. It symbolizes the majesty of Christ in His humility. It is used by the Church for the penitential seasons and, traditionally, was also used during Advent.

Blue, which is gradually replacing violet for Advent. Blue is the color of royalty, and therefore fittingly symbolizes the coming of Him who was born King.

White, the color of light. It symbolizes divinity, purity, victory. It is used for Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Trinity Sunday.

Green, the common color of nature in the freshness of bloom. Symbolic of Christian life and growth, it is used during the many Sundays of the Trinity season.

Red, associated with blood and spirit. It is used on Pentecost and Reformation Sundays and in festivals such as Thanksgiving, anniversaries and dedications. It symbolizes the zeal of the Church, and it is used to commemorate the martyrs who sealed their testimony with their blood.

Black, the color of darkness and death. It is used on Good Friday.

Calls to worship

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

(Psalm 46:10)

Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.

(Psalm 99:9)

O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

(Psalm 107:1-2)

O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful

kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

(Psalm 117)

This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

(Psalm 118:24)

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

(Psalm 122:1)

Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. . . . Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

(Psalm 150:1, 6)

But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

(Habakkuk 2:20)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:28)

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

(John 4:24)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

(Colossians 3:1-2)

Invocations: These prayers may be easily expanded to include the entire congregation by changing the singular "I," "me" and "my" to "we," "us" and "our" and modifying the other parts of speech to show agreement.

But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

(Psalm 5:7-8)

Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.
O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be

ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

(Psalm 25:1-3)

Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.

(Psalm 25:4-6)

LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. . . . My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

(Psalm 26:8, 12)

I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the

heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

(Psalm 57:9-11)

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

(Psalm 63:1-4)

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. . . . Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.

(Psalm 84:1-2, 4)

Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call

upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

(Psalm 86:6-10)

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

(Psalm 123:1-2)

Offertory sentences

Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

(Psalm 50:14-15)

Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

(Psalm 96:7-8)

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

(Proverbs 3:9-10)

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

(Malachi 3:10)

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.

(1 Corinthians 16:2)

Benedictions

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:
The LORD make his face shine upon
thee, and be gracious unto thee: The
LORD lift up his countenance upon thee,
and give thee peace.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

Now to him that is of power to
stablish you according to my gospel,
and the preaching of Jesus Christ, ac-
cording to the revelation of the mys-
tery, which was kept secret since the
world began, but now is made manifest,
and by the scriptures of the prophets,
according to the commandment of the
everlasting God, made known to all na-
tions for the obedience of faith: To God
only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ
for ever. Amen.

(Romans 16:25-27)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and
the love of God, and the communion of
the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

(2 Corinthians 13:14)

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Galatians 1:3-5)

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

(Ephesians 3:20-21)

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(1 Timothy 1:17)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Hebrews 13:20-21)

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

(1 Peter 5:10-11)

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

(Jude 24-25)

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

(Revelation 1:5-6)

OCCASIONAL SUNDAYS

Throughout the church year, there are not only the universally recognized religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas, but other significant days—Mother’s Day, Pentecost and Thanksgiving, to name a few, as well as national holidays and even local commemorations of significance to the Church.

If the minister suits a sermon to all of these other occasional days, he will have few remaining Sundays to proclaim the whole counsel of God to his people. He should therefore take care that these occasional Sundays do not intrude on his systematic exposition of God’s Word. If he preaches a message to mothers one year, he may wish to preach to fathers the next year—and to children the next. If his sermon one year is in keeping with Independence Day, he may decide to forgo a similar theme the next. It is possible to recognize special occasions in the course of a church service without devoting sermons to them.

The minister has a God-given responsibility to declare “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), and he will look critically at any occasion or program that deprives his congregation of such comprehensive preaching.