

Worship: How are things to be done in Christ's church?

What ought public worship to look like?

1. Challenges: change in air. Old is out; go with young, new....
 - a. Church: Christ's work → happens all over globe, numerous cultures/times. Things done differently in different cultures/times. So: why insist our way right?
 - b. Ours is entertainment era, including audience participation. Echo in church services, especially Pentecostal/Charismatic – each member does own part → singing, dancing, testimonial, etc. Attractive, especially over against 'institutionalism'.
 - i. So: why do church as do? Tradition??
 - ii. That reason not good enough!!
2. But: if church has heavenly origin, obvious Lord sets agenda, determines what fitting. **
 - a. Recall previous lectures....
3. Who Christ gather? → God's people by covenant, ie, believers & seed. Cf Dt 4:10: assembly at Mt Sinai is His people-by-covenant. Ibid church of NT.
 - a. Covenant: bond of love between God and sinners ∴ communication, cf Genesis 3:8, etc. See also Dt 4:10: people to hear, ie, God speak, cf 4:12f.
 - i. Yet not one-way conversation but dialogue, cf nature of love/ covenant: God want response.
 1. ∴ at Mt Sinai God commands construction of tabernacle, ie, people present sin offering (=confession of sin), burnt offering (=offer heart to you); peace offering (=confession all well between God and us) – and God speaks of forgiveness, blessing
 - a. point: liturgy is covenantal, cf Order of Worship, pg 584
 - ii. Since Christ gathers/Head, He speaks
 1. Not new material, but opening of existing Word
 2. Not just first to speak, but primary speaker. So: church not for entertainment, nor display of talent.
 4. Why Christ gather us each Sunday?
 - a. We say: so we may worship Him (=worthy of praise), cf Ps 95:2,5; Rev 5:13.
 - i. Term suggest movement of conversation primarily from earth to heaven, ie, we do most of 'talking'. Result: emphasis on our prayers & songs, ie, our agenda, feelings....
 1. This fits well with our narcissic culture
 - ii. But: worship is for *all* of life, cf Romans 12:1.
 1. Washing dishes is worship! ∴ careful how do it!
 - iii. More: we creatures – He God! He not need us; we need Him. More: sinners. Our thoughts/feelings *not* most NB!
 - b. Fact: to live well in His world we need His instruction. So He speak to us! This is primary! Recall: Bible is God's revelation to us, not our thoughts/wishes to God....
 - i. See Exodus 19:3: God does speaking. People respond, vs 8. See vs 9 ∴ 10ff. ∴ also 20:4ff. Note initiative in dialogue, who sets agenda/topic. Response determined by His identity, cf Ex 20:18ff, esp vs 21: people not forward, but humble!
 - ii. Leviticus 9f, esp 10:3b → 10:11.
 - iii. Hebrews 12:18ff, esp vs 25: He speaks, we listen – with attitude of vs 28b

1. So: Lord gathers us to speak to us.* Care, love! He knows our trials, struggles, weaknesses, what's ahead in life this week....

5. Specific details follow:

- a. ∴ Scripture reading, preaching is central!. Cf Ps 19:7ff; Romans 10:14f.
 - i. See also 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Hebrews 4:12f; 1 Peter 1:23ff.
 - 1 ∴ reformed emphasis on preaching – pulpit in centre
 - 2 This the key of kingdom, cf Mt 16:16-19, cf Isaiah 22:20ff
 - a. Powerful, cf Acts 2:14ff, 37,41; 3:12ff, 4:4
 - b. Listen eagerly, humbly – though what Word says can be so uncomfortable!
 - ii. Preaching must be *God's* word, cf Acts 13:5; 2 Timothy 4:2 ∴ authority – Mt 7:29; Acts 14:21 → not: how to live happily, get rich, etc. Holy Spirit applies it, cf 16:14. Yet human responsibility, cf 14:1
 - iii. Not favourite doctrines, but whole Bible, cf Acts 20:27; 2 Tim 4:2ff
 - 1 ∴ edifying, ie, truth builds up, ie, prompts to proper praise/repentance.
 - 2 Recall: we sinful, God gave 2nd commandment for reason!
 - a. Do not insist on your agenda in church/liturgy!

b. Response

- i. Prayer
 - 1 Learn from Bible's prayers, ie, tone/content, cf Neh 9; Dan 9; Psalms; prayers of Jesus, Paul
 - 2 ∴ *Book of Praise* pg, 619
- ii. Singing
 1. Learn from Bible's singing:
 - a. None in tabernacle → emphasis on sacrifices by Levites (though song of Miriam in Ex 15 & Song of Moses in Dt 32) & teaching
 - b. Much in temple, cf 1 Chronicles 15:16; 25:1,6 → with David they generated psalms fitting for Israel to sing in response to gospel – be it in midst of life's realities
 - i. Note: singing is new ministry of priests/Levites! Cf 1 Chron 16:4ff; 37f. This foreshadows fulfillment of tabernacle/temple through coming Christ.
 - c. ∴ church of latter OT & NT sings Psalms God gave, cf *Book of Praise*.
 - i. No more place for personal flavour than in Lev 10:1f
 - 2 Paul: Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16: terms here not interchangeable. ∴ hymns of NT, cf Rev 5:9ff – note reference to singing in vs 9,12,13.
 - a. Hymns & spiritual songs of same flavour as psalms, cf God's holiness....
 - b. Music to compliment songs, cf Calvin. Local culture not final determinative! Not flippant....

iii. Collection

1. Learn from Bible's collections, eg, 1 Corinthians 16:1f; 2 Corinthians 8:1ff

Point: it not about our feelings, but about God's revelation. Ie, good theology leads to God-centered liturgy. This Art 32.