

Why Do You Worship?
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- “I don’t need to go to a church on Sunday morning...I can worship God wherever I am!” On the golf course. On the lake in my fishing boat. While I’m cutting my grass.
- Ever hear that line from someone?
- Question: Is it POSSIBLE to worship God anywhere?
 - God is everywhere and we can worship Him anywhere.
- Is it PROBABLE that someone in settings like that are truly FOCUSED on worship? What do you think?
 - When most golfers utter God’s name after a shot is it in a time of praise and worship?
- Susan has a favorite quote at our house: “Just because you CAN, doesn’t mean you SHOULD.”
- Question: How many of you like to go to SPORTING EVENTS or CONCERTS more than you like to watch them on TV or listen to them on CD?
 - Why?
 - What are the benefits you get by going to a sporting event or concert LIVE rather than listening or watching from a distance?
 - EXPERIENCE – Being in that stadium or arena with other like-minded people makes your time there an EXPERIENCE
 - EXCITEMENT – Being in the middle of that EXPERIENCE causes you to be EXCITED about the event
 - FOCUS – Being in the middle of that EVENT causes you to better FOCUS on what is happening
 - BONDING – Being with all those like-minded people causes you to feel a part of something bigger than you

God knows how we are. And He knew for us to REALLY FOCUS on WORSHIPPING HIM, we’d need to have a PLACE in which to do it and a PEOPLE with whom to do it. That’s why he gave such SPECIFIC instructions to Moses in Exodus 25-31.

- Let’s read Exodus 25:8-9

Exodus 25:8-9

8 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. 9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

- A “SANCTUARY” a “TABERNACLE” ---
 - Sanctuary means “Holy place”...God is Holy so if He’s going to be there it would BE HOLY
 - Tabernacle means (literally) “dwelling” or “tent”
- God is telling Moses...build me a HOUSE...a place to dwell

Now, Acts 17:24 tells us...

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

- So it begs the question: Why would God need a house?
 - The first answer: Because He said so.
 - Secondly: God didn't have them build a house FOR HIM; He had them build it FOR US
- Why would God "pitch His tent" in the middle of His children in a physical place?
- Though He is PRESENT with us at all times; God wants His people to CENTER OUR LIVES AROUND HIM.
- Our WORSHIP CENTER or SANCTUARY is a place where we EXPECT to find God's PRESENCE.
- Do people always show up at church acting like they expect God to be there?
- Back to our "ball game" or "concert" example. What if people showed up at an event like that and:
 - Just sat on their hands and looked bored
 - Dozed off
 - It wouldn't appear you were very excited to be there!
- On the other hand...what if we showed up at worship with the ENTHUSIASM and EXPECTATION appropriate when we consider GOD HIMSELF it going to be there

Though God is present everywhere, He wanted His people to have a central place where we can go and expect to be in His presence. That place is the local church where believers gather to worship as a group.

The point is: When the Lord's people regularly gather in designated places and worship Him as a community of faith, we show our firm conviction that He is present among us.

Exodus 25:17-22

17 "Make an atonement cover [a] of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. [b] 18 And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. 19 Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. 20 The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. 21 Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. 22 There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.

- In these verses God gives Moses very specific instructions about how to make the Ark of the Covenant.
- He starts with what is called the Mercy Seat.

- Anyone familiar with the Mercy Seat? What was it?
- The Hebrew term conveys the idea of covering over...literally it was the cover or the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.
- The root of that term refers to atonement and reconciliation
- The Mercy Seat in Old Testament worship was the spot where reconciliation between a Holy God and sinful humanity was portrayed symbolically by the sprinkling of blood on and around that Mercy Seat.
- It was not just the covering of the ark, it represented the covering over of the people's sins
- Verse 18: Cherubim...What do we normally think about when we hear the term cherub or cherubim? Chubby little babies with wings...like Cupid.
- Anyone know what cherubs were really like in the scripture?
- They were angels that served as guards. When God cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden He placed two cherubs to guard the entrance.
- The two cherubim were to be made of one solid piece of gold WITH the Mercy Seat.
- Notice in verse 20...God even specified which way the faces of the cherubim would look...what was it? They would look DOWN towards the Mercy Seat. Any idea why they would look down? REVERENCE to the presence of God just above them.
- Verse 21: What did God say Moses should place in the Ark?
 - THE TESTIMONY...what was that?
 - The stone tablets with the 10 Commandments on them
 - Later, a jar of manna and Aaron's "rod" that budded (Heb. 9:4)
 - These were reminders of:
 - God's EXPECTATIONS: 10 Commandments
 - God's PROVISION: Manna
 - God's GIFT of SERVANTS to lead in worship (Aaron's descendents)
- Verse 22: What did God say He would do when the Mercy Seat was completed?
 - I will meet with thee
 - I will commune with thee
 - I will give commandment to the Children of Israel
- Let's expand a minute on those three. These are THREE THINGS WE CAN EXPECT from God when we ENCOUNTER HIM IN CORPORATE WORSHIP:
 - MEET - To summon; at an appointed time. (Concert "Meet & Greet" example: Beth Moore conference)
 - COMMUNE – Hebrew word means: Declare; Command; Pronounce; i.e. COMMUNICATE
 - COMMAND – We know what that means!
- Question: When you go into the worship service, do you ever think about it as a time that God has set aside to MEET with you? That He plans to SPEAK with you there? That He is going to give you and me our MARCHING ORDERS?
- Example: If your boss at work says he/she wants to meet at an appointed time; to speak with you for a specific purpose; and to give you instructions on how he/she

wants you to do your job --- WOULD YOU SHOW UP? Or, WOULD YOU JUST BLOW 'EM OFF and SKIP THE MEETING?

God set the standard with Moses and the Children of Israel. Gathering in HIS HOUSE with HIS PEOPLE for WORSHIP isn't just a take it or leave it option. It's an appointment with the GOD OF THE UNIVERSE for a PERSONAL MEETING TO GET OUR INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIFE!

- By the way, husbands, have you ever had a conversation with your wife and all the sudden she stops and asks you: "What did I just say?"
- I mean sometimes we sit right across from someone important telling us something important and we're so distracted we can't tell you what they just said!
- You think that ever happens in worship?
- You think we ever get so distracted or sleepy or bored that if God stopped the service and asked: "What did I just say?" we couldn't answer correctly?
- Just asking?
- Get to the middle of the week and we get all down in the mouth and say: "God, you seem so silent why aren't you speaking to me?!?"
- God says: "I did speak to you...Sunday at 9:30...you were too busy mentally picking apart the music selections in the service and wondering what time you'd get out and where you should go eat and look at that kid squirming up there...and on and on and on...you were too DISTRACTED to hear a word I said."

The next time you and I decide to skip the worship service for no good reason just picture God sitting there waiting for you to show up for the appointment He made to tell us what we need to know.

Let's move on...look at

Exodus 29:38-42

38 "This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: two lambs a year old. 39 Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight. 40 With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah [a] of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin [b] of oil from pressed olives, and a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. 41 Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning—a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.

42 "For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you;

- God not only expects us to SHOW UP in WORSHIP...He expects us to BRING and OFFERING

- Oh great, now he's gonna talk about money!
- Well, yes and no. Of course God has instructed us to TITHE but I'll let Pastor Johnny talk about that.
- God expects us to bring to worship OUR VERY BEST in every area of life
- Here He prescribed burnt offerings of TWO lambs that were one year old PLUS flour and oil and wine...a complete meal
- In Old Testament times before Christ died for us these offerings were for the forgiveness of sin
- When the priest placed his hand on the head of the lamb to be slain is symbolized the transfer of sin from the priest to the sacrifice
- Two lambs was a COSTLY SACRIFICE to these people
- A one year old lamb was valuable in their society...a fully grown lamb could be used for wool or breeding or food.
- Our commentary says that in these FIRE OFFERINGS the fire consumed EVERY COMBUSTABLE part of the sacrifice. As the fire consumed it and it all vanished from site it VISUALLY REPRESENTED GOD'S ACCEPTANCE of the sacrifice.
- Verse 41: As that smoke rose up toward Heaven what did God say would result?
 - A "pleasing aroma"...or "sweet savor"
 - Now God doesn't need to smell the aroma of good BAR B Q...but He uses this as a lesson to us that what He DOES ENJOY is the aroma of OBEDIENCE and TRUST from US!
- When we come to WORSHIP and bring Him our best: Yes, He expects us to bring an offering of our money (which is really HIS MONEY He put us in charge of). But He also wants OUR BEST in terms of service; enthusiasm; love; it is a SWEET AROMA to Him.

If you think a hard-working waitress is insulted by a poor tipper...imagine what the God of the universe thinks when we show up about every fourth Sunday and drop a buck in the collection plate out of everything He's given to us.

Giving our best to God honors Him; allows us to participate in His Kingdom work; and makes us into more JOYFUL, GENEROUS believers who reflect God's LOVE and GRACE.

One more passage and we'll wrap up...

Exodus 29:43-46:

43 there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory.

44 "So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. 45 Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. 46 They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

- Verse 43: What does that word CONSECRATE mean?
 - To set aside
 - He said He would CONSECRATE the TENT OF MEETING (in our day the house of God) as a HOLY PLACE that represents HIS GLORY
- Question: When God's GLORY descended on the tabernacle in that day how did He show up (visually)?
 - A cloud by day and a fire by night
- You and I should be so attuned to the GLORY of God that we can sense it in His house as if the place were wrapped in a cloud!
- Verse 44: He said He would CONSECRATE those who served Him in His house. A couple of weeks ago, Dean Mabry was ORDAINED and LICENSED for the ministry
- In that service we recognized that God has CONSECRATED Dean for the ministry just as He did Aaron and his sons in this passage
- Finally, in verses 45 and 46 God reiterates EXACTLY How He planned to live with His people.
 - He said: "I'll LIVE AMONG THEM"

Life Application Study Bible:

"Throughout the Bible, God shows that He is not an absentee landlord. He wants to live among us, even in our hearts."

- And He also said: "THEY WILL KNOW I AM THEIR GOD"

We need to CELEBRATE God's GLORY by regularly gathering with HIS PEOPLE to WORSHIP HIM.

Ligon Duncan writes:

In worship we come to give to God the glory due His name and what do we come to get? Not our fancies tickled. We come to get Him. We come to give our praise to Him and we come to get Him. It's like a husband who comes to get his bride. That's what he wants, he wants his wife. He comes for her. And we learn from Exodus chapter 25:8, that God wants a tent so He may dwell among His people, and remind them that the great blessedness of life and worship is everlasting fellowship with the living God.

So, What's the TAKEAWAY?

- Regularly gathering with God's people to WORSHIP together show's that He is present among us
- Not only is He PRESENT when we gather to WORSHIP, He said He would MEET with us; COMMUNICATE with us; and INSTRUCT us in what He'd have us to do
- If we come expecting His presence and treating WORSHIP like a FIRM APPOINTMENT with the God of the UNIVERSE we'll give it a higher priority

- He expects us to GIVE OUR BEST...not only in money but in time; talents; obedience and love. Are our lives a PLEASING AROMA or the opposite?
- God has CONSECRATED His house and those who serve in it as Holy and SET APART. We should CELEBRATE God's GLORY by regularly gathering together to WORSHIP Him as a FAMILY