

NBTS
M. DIV
Ad 31w
248.3

WORSHIPPING GOD IN SPIRIT AND
IN TRUTH: STEPS TO ITS REALIZATION
IN A LOCAL BAPTIST CHURCH

An Essay Presented to the
Faculty of the
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
Ogbomoso, Oyo State

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF DIVINITY

by
Ezekiel Adeniyi Adebayo

June, 1997
June, 1997

99154

ABSTRACT

The aspiration of any worship leader who is privileged to lead God's people in corporate worship is to discern whatever weaknesses manifest in the worship services, and work hard to remove such, so as to build a better worship atmosphere. That will help members who are hungry and thirsty for a meaningful worship experience with the Lord that calls His people to worship. Chapter one of the essay is an introduction which highlights the purpose and scope of the essay.

Chapter two deals with the foundation of public worship in the Old and New Testaments, the theological basis and the principles of worship.

Chapter three focuses on the elements of worship such as music, prayer and the Holy Scriptures, read and preached. It considers the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper with other aspects of worship among which are: funerals, weddings and church festivals.

Chapter four examines steps to having Spirit-led worship as regards good planning of the liturgy and the roles of an effective worship leader. Evaluation and methods of confronting hindrances to meaningful worship are explored.

Chapter five concludes with a strong challenge to worship leaders to invest painstaking efforts into planning and leading worship to the glory of God and the blessings of the people.

CONCLUSION

Worshippers come from various backgrounds and experiences. Some come with preparation and anticipation to have meaningful encounter with God while others are only present in body which leads to divided response in worship. Worship planners should take the worshippers into consideration. Pastoral encounter outside the sanctuary should inform the minister of the people's needs, so that the structuring of the liturgy will be to meet needs. The worship leader should sharpen his communication skill to enhance effectiveness, and always take the recipients of his ministration into consideration, both in the planning and delivery stages. Leaders should exhibit servant-leadership traits and be exemplary in their conduct, mode of dressing and maintain decorum worthy of a minister of Christ. The pastor should train worshippers how to worship God in spirit and in truth. The pastor should maintain a serious devotional and Bible-study life so as to be in tune constantly with the Holy Spirit. He should evaluate his sermon personally by asking himself the following questions: Are the contents logically arranged? Is the sermon interesting? Is it too predictable? Will the introduction

catch the attention of the listeners? Are the points in the outline written in the present tense using active verbs? Will the applications meet the needs of the people and will they fulfill the purpose of God in their lives? Will the conclusions touch the hearers' hearts and move them to make decisions? The pastor should maintain good facial contact and see whether the people are following him or not. After the sermon he should make further evaluation to see whether or not he had a sense of fulfillment. The pastor should have a good attitude about his funeral and wedding aspects of worship. This will enable him help his people to worship in any of these services. He should also strengthen fellowship through the administration of the Lord's Supper and baptism. He should be innovative in the order of service. Above all, he too should worship.

The music minister should help people want to sing by allowing the congregation to enjoy reasonable participation in worship. He should see to it that the church music is Christ-centred, scriptural and be opened to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He should avoid calling attention to himself.

The prayer in corporate worship should be a conversation with God, acknowledging His leadership, and with a spirit that is ready to accept God's answer to such prayers. Prayer in corporate worship should touch on all aspects of people's needs. The Church should pray for the strengthening

and expansion of God's kingdom on earth. Variety must feature in the Church's mode of praying and the Church prayer should also be a response to God's Word and the revelation to Himself.

The offerings are aspects of worship that physically express the thankfulness of worshippers to a good God. It should be done reverently and yet be a celebration of God's goodness. There should be a meaningful smooth flow of the elements of worship in a dialogical and dramatic pattern. For worship to be in spirit and in truth the following ways must be considered:

1. The congregation must be made to participate in a variety of religious expression and experience. They should be given the opportunity to communicate with God and with one another.

2. Unproductive rigidity should be avoided in the time, place and sequence of the elements of worship. Variety can enrich worship if the people are prepared in advance. The order of worship could be planned to reflect the purpose.

3. Worshippers should be allowed to freely express their feelings but in an orderly manner. This will increase joy, relief pain and will enable worshippers respond positively to God's self-revelation to Himself

4. Include the note of celebration. The Church must rediscover the joyful simplicity and gladness of heart that the early Christians experienced.

Finally, no efforts should be spared to restore worship to its original purity and power which is far beyond maintaining the prosperity of the Church. The worshippers should be able to experience God who is both transcendent and immanent, as this will make worship a miracle and in it man gives to God the glory due to Him.