

What is a Guide to Congregational Worship?

This guide is designed to be a tool for you and your family as you gather corporately with the body, as well as in your own times of family or personal worship. Here you'll find the general outline of congregational worship. May it serve you as you seek to glorify Christ in all of life.

Elements of Congregational Worship.

Scriptural Call to Worship - The congregation is called to worship God from a passage of Scripture (Ps. 95:1-5).

Prayer of Praise - A prayer to the triune God, voiced on behalf of the congregation, praising Him for who He is and what He has done (Eph.1:3-14).

Prayer of Confession - A prayer to God, voiced on behalf of the congregation, confessing our sins and seeking forgiveness for Christ's sake (Neh.1:4-11; 1 John 1:9).

Prayer of Thanksgiving - A prayer to God voiced on behalf of the congregation, giving thanks to Him for what He has done for us through Christ (Col. 3:15-17).

Prayer of Intercession - A prayer to God, voiced on behalf of the congregation, asking for God's will and work to be done in the church and in the world (Matt. 6:9-12; 1 Tim. 2:1-6).

Prayer of Illumination— A prayer to God, voiced on behalf of the congregation, asking Him to help us understand His Word by His Spirit (Ps. 119:18; 1 Cor. 2:12-16).

Prayer of Assurance - A prayer to God, voiced on behalf of the congregation, asking that He would grant us the assurance of His promises held out to us in His Word (Phil.1:3-6, 1 Thess. 5:23-24).

Assurance of Forgiveness - A promise read from Scripture assuring the repentant sinner of God's forgiveness and cleansing through Christ (1 Jn. 1:9).

Congregational Confession of Faith - A corporate confession of the essential truths of the Christian faith voiced by the entire congregation. The Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and other historic Christian confessions, and doctrinal statements found in scripture comprise these public statements of our common faith (1 Tim. 3:16).

Congregational Singing - The corporate singing of the truths of Scripture and praise to God and edification of Christ's church (Ps. 95:1-5; Eph.5:18-20; Col. 3:16).

Benediction - A bi-directional address, when appealing to God, a pronouncement of the blessings of God's grace in Christ is voiced upon God's people, encouraging them to live faithfully in light of God's Word and grace (Rom.16:25-27; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 13:20-21).

Congregational Giving - As a grateful response to what God has done for us by His grace, we generously give to support the ministry of the church in the world (1Cor.16:1-2, 2 Cor.8:1-5, 9).

Scripture Reading - The public reading of God's Word during the congregational worship of the church (1Tim 4:13).

Sermon - The preaching of God's Word, giving explanation and application of God's truth to God's people, with a focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ (Lk. 24:25-27; 1Tim. 4:13; 2Tim. 4:1-2).

Baptism - The first of two church ordinances commanded by Christ in which the believer is immersed in water signifying inward repentance and faith in Christ, union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, cleansing and forgiveness of sins, salvation from the wrath of God, the transfer of citizenship into Christ's Kingdom, and the entrance into the church of God (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:1-14).

The Lord's Supper - The second of two church ordinances commanded by Christ in which members of the church eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine signifying their present faith in Christ, communion with God through the new covenant in Christ's blood, and communion with God's people in Christ, as they anticipate the Lord's return (Lk. 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:23-34).

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The Mission of the Church, Christ's bride, is worship and witness: to worship the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and to witness to a lost world of what God has done in Christ as Creator and Redeemer, and what He will do in Christ as Consummator of all things. One day, the Church's witness in the present world will cease, but her worship in the world to come will not. In the future new heavens and new earth, a great multitude that no one can number, from every nation, and from all tribes and peoples and languages, will stand before the throne and say, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen!" (Rev. 7:12).

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