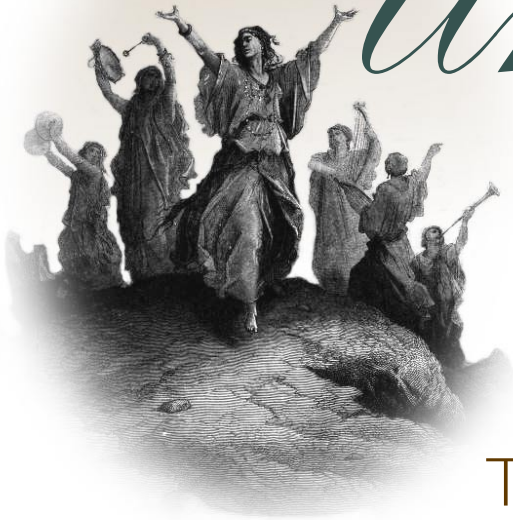


In Unison



The trumpeters and
singers joined in unison,
as with one voice, to
give praise and thanks
to the Lord.
2 Chronicles 5:13

The Spirit and the Flesh

Working at It

Worship and the leading of others in worship are developed, practiced skills. They do not happen accidentally, but are developed because we have set our minds on them as something worthwhile and profitable—first for God, then for ourselves.

So what are some practical ways we can prepare ourselves to be good demonstrators and prompters of worship?

It may come as a surprise to learn that our preparation for Sunday should begin on Saturday:

√ *Don't make your Saturday so busy and hectic that you are worn out and frazzled for Sunday morning.*

√ *Give yourself a time of quiet and peace Saturday evening to calm your spirit for the next day.*

√ *Get organized on Saturday evening for the next morning, so that you will arrive refreshed and expectant.*

The best way to prepare yourself for leading the worship of others is to worship God on your own:

√ *Sing and listen to praise choruses as you are on your way to church. Let the environment of worship envelop you, and lift you out of the environment of the everyday world.*

√ *Spend some time with your heavenly Father, asking Him for a heart and spirit filled with praise.*

God is interested in people who worship. The very best way to prepare for worship on Sunday is to be a worshiper every day of the week.

Look for opportunities during the week to praise and worship God for who He is. Don't wait for Him to do something for which you are grateful. We thank God for *what* He does; we worship Him for *who* He is. Because God's character is constant—and consistent—we can worship Him at any time. The time is always right to praise the Father.

The choir member who is well-rehearsed in worship will truly be a Spirit-filled leader of worship in others, and will approach Sunday morning with a sense of expectation and awe.

W

orship of God does not come naturally to a people preoccupied with self.

And there is no natural predilection toward worship in those who have been designated as its leaders. Like a sound, healthy marriage, praise and worship require effort to do them well.

Like the disciples waiting for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, our spirit may want to worship but our natural body—and inclination—will not be in that direction.

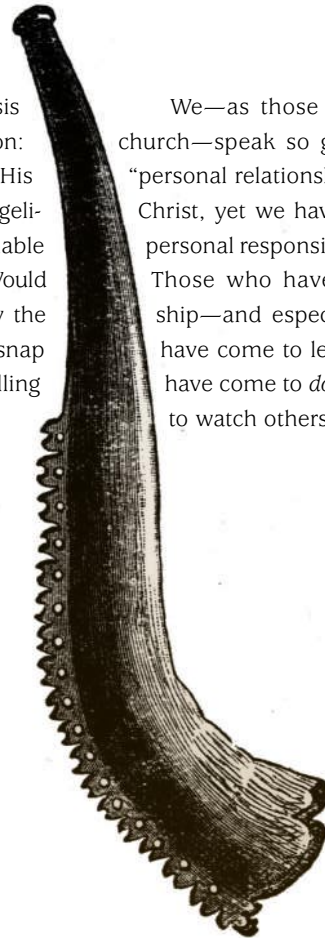
I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain. A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

This writer is drawn to Tozer's remarks about "longing after God" as they pertain to this idea of our Spiritual preparation for worship.

For that should be the genesis and driving energy of our preparation: we must actively pursue Him, seek His face, welcome His touch. The evangelical church has fallen into this damnable complacency as regards our God! Would that He periodically pick us up by the ankles and give our bodies a good snap to jolt us back into a sensible, fulfilling relationship with Him.

We—as those comprising the church—speak so glibly about our “personal relationship” with God in Christ, yet we have delegated our personal responsibilities to others. Those who have come to worship—and especially those who have come to lead in worship—have come to *do* something, not to watch others do it for them.

“How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers. Everything is made to center upon the initial act of “accepting” Christ (a term, incidentally, which is not found in the Bible) and we are not expected thereafter to crave any further revelation of God to our souls. We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found Him, we need no more seek Him. This is set before us as the last word in orthodoxy, and it is taken for granted that no Bible-taught Christian ever believed otherwise. Thus the whole testimony of the worshipping, seeking, singing church on that subject is crisply set aside. The experiential heart-theology of a grand army of fragrant saints is rejected in favor of a smug interpretation of Scripture which would certainly have sounded strange to an Augustine, a Rutherford or a Brainerd.” Tozer



Scripture

Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" Exodus 33:15-16

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours. 1 Cor. 1:2

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephes. 3:16-19

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephes. 4:11-13

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver; but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. 2 Tim. 2:20-21

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse

us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

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Hymns and Choruses

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart (Croly)
Spirit of God descend upon my heart:
Wean it from earth, thro' all its pulses move.

We Have Come into His House (Ballinger)
Let's forget about ourselves,
and magnify His name,
and worship Him.

Lord, I Have Shut the Door (Runyan)
Lord, I have shut the door,
Speak now the word
Which in the din and throng
Could not be heard.

Revive us Again (Mackay)
Revive us again--fill each heart with Thy love;
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.

Rise Up, O Church of God (Merrill)
Rise up, O church of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and mind and soul and strength
To serve the King of Kings.

In Unison

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