

An Introduction to Biblical Worship

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Table of Contents

1. What is worship?	3
2. Worship is both a personal and group activity	5
3. In worship we give ourselves to God, but more importantly God gives his Word and Sacraments to us.	7
4. The God of heaven is with us everywhere, but in a special way in group worship.....	9
5. Worship can be spontaneous, but planned structured worship has advantages.....	12
6. God is pleased with our humble worship, but worship is a gift to God and therefore should be the best we can offer.	14
7. Worship is a universal experience but should reflect a Christian's culture.	16
8. When we worship we fellowship with God and fellowship with other Christians.....	18
Appendix 1: Brief overview and explanation of the main liturgies in <i>Christian Worship</i>	20
Appendix 2: The Church Year.....	22
Appendix 3: Colors and their Meaning.....	23
Appendix 4: Symbols and Art.....	24
Appendix 5: The Pastor: His Clothing and Actions	26

Lesson 1

What is worship?

Genesis 22:5 -- Abram said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will **worship** and then we will come back to you."

What did Abram and Isaac **do** "over there"?

9 Aspects of worship in the Bible

1. Praise

Psalm 100:2 -- **Worship** the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

2. Bowing down

Matthew 4:9 -- All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and **worship** me.

2 Chronicles 20:18 -- Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in **worship** before the LORD.

3. Sacrifice

Joshua 22:27 -- On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will **worship** the LORD at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings.

4. Praying (and fasting)

Luke 2:37 -- And then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but **worshiped** night and day, fasting and praying.

5. Following God's teachings

2 Kings 17:34 -- To this day they persist in their former practices. They neither **worship** the LORD nor adhere to the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands that the LORD gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel.

6. Carrying out ceremonies

Ezra 7:19 -- Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for **worship** in the temple of your God.

7. Confessing faith in God

Matthew 14:33 -- Then those who were in the boat **worshiped** him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

8. Living a godly life

Romans 12:1 -- Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of **worship**.

9. Worshiping the true God alone

Luke 4:8 -- Jesus answered, "It is written: '**Worship** the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Conclusion: Worship is our humble and obedient approach to the true God in prayer, praise and offerings. Worship takes place through special acts and in our entire daily life.

In the Bible, the word *worship* emphasizes one or more of the meanings just given. Already in the early church, however, the word *worship* came to be used in the narrower meaning of our *church service* -- our praise and offerings to God **and the proclamation of God to us in Word and Sacrament**. In this course we will use the term **A** worship service when we are thinking of this narrower meaning.

Discussion Questions

1. When many Christians think of "worship", they first think of the Sunday church service. What parts of our Sunday service would fit the Biblical description of worship?
2. What parts of the Sunday service would not be "worship" in its narrowest sense.
3. What aspects of worship mentioned above are usually not part of our worship services on Sunday?
4. When we pray, we "talk to" God -- thanking him, praising him, and often requesting things from him. What makes prayer important is the fact that God hears us and answers our prayers. Thus we might say that prayer is a 2-way conversation -- our talking to God, and his answering us. In what ways is worship also 2-way?
5. In what ways is our Sunday church service 2-way?
6. Read John 4: 19-24. How does Jesus' understanding of worship differ from that of the woman at the well?

Lesson 2

Worship is both a personal and group activity

1. All Christians can worship God individually and personally.

1 Peter 2:5 -- You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy **priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

(This is often called the *universal priesthood of all believers*.)

2. Christians worship individually in their hearts

a. Alone -- Matthew 26:36 -- Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

b. Our every breath should be prayer and praise -- 1 Corinthians 10:31 -- So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

c. But we also are moved to worship God for special blessings -- Genesis 24:48 -- And I bowed down and **worshiped** the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has led me to get the granddaughter of my master's brother [as a husband] for his son.

3. Christians also worship in groups (as the Church)

a. As part of our fellowship -- Acts 2:46 -- Every day **they continued to meet together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

b. To encourage each other -- Hebrews 10:25 -- **Let us not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

c. As a witness and proclamation to others -- Psalm 102:21-22 -- So the name of the LORD will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms **assemble to worship** the LORD.

4. Christ is with us in group worship.

a. Jesus says so -- Matthew 18:20 -- For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

b. Group worship is a natural expression of faith -- Psalm 102:22 --when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to **worship** the LORD.

5. The Christian family has a special opportunity to grow and worship together.

Exodus 12:25-27 When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD....'

2 Timothy 3:15 -- And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways Christians might worship individually today?
2. Besides our Sunday services, what ways might Christians jointly worship today?
3. Are there ways that you worship individually while taking part in a Sunday service?
4. According to Acts 2:46, what joint activities went along with joint worship?
5. If we all can worship God individually, why do we need to meet together?
6. If all Christians can worship God individually, why do we need pastors?
7. There is a saying, "The family that prays together, stays together." Does the Bible agree with this? List several different ways that a family can pray together.

Lesson 3

In worship we give ourselves to God, but more importantly God gives his Word and Sacraments to us.

1. In the church service God gives us his greatest gifts

a. Forgiveness of our sins -- Ephesians 1:7 -- In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

b. The gospel message of free salvation -- Romans 1:16 -- I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

c. Jesus' body and blood -- Matthew 26:28 -- This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

d. Encouragement and guidance for our lives -- 2 Timothy 4:2 -- Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction.

2. In the worship service we have opportunities to give our best to God.

a. Praise -- Psalm 9:1 -- For the director of music. To *the tune of* "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David. I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders.

b. Prayer -- Psalm 17:1 -- Hear, O LORD, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer-- it does not rise from deceitful lips.

c. Offerings -- Numbers 18:29 -- You must present as the LORD's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.

d. Repentance -- 1 John 1:9 -- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

3. Using the traditional liturgy is one way of ensuring that God's gifts to us remain at the center of our worship services and that all worshipers have an opportunity to offer God their humble "thank you" in return.

Discussion Questions

1. Indicate whether the listed parts of the Sunday worship service are predominantly God giving to us, we giving to God, or are both.

	God gives to us	We give to God
1. Singing hymns		
2. Sermon		
3. Baptism		
4. Prayers		
5. Lord's Supper		
6. Offering		
7. Blessing		

2. In some non-Lutheran churches the worship service consists mostly of praise songs and a sermon which tells Christians how they should live. Where is the emphasis in those services -- on what God gives us or what we give God?

3. In some Pentecostal services, much time is given to speaking in tongues (non-human languages). Where do you think the emphasis would be in such services?

4. It has been said, "Christians need to go to church to learn about God." Is that a good description of why we go to church? Explain your answer.

Lesson 4

The God of heaven is with us everywhere, but in a special way in group worship.

1. God is the Lord of Heaven and above all creation and thus deserves our worship.

Ephesians 1:18-21 -- [God the Father has] mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given....

Malachi 1:6 -- "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty.

2. Yet God is also present with us personally in worship

2 Corinthians 6:16 -- . As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Matthew 18:20 -- For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

3. Group worship can also take place anyplace where people can meet.

a. **outside** -- 2 Samuel 15:32 -- When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.

b. **at special buildings** -- Exodus 29:42 -- "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. (Note: God does not give a similar command in the New Testament.)

c. **in homes** -- Romans 16:3,5 -- Greet Priscilla and Aquila.... Greet also the church that meets at their house.

4. Where we worship is not as important as how we worship.

a. **Some worship methods and places are associated with false gods and thus are not acceptable for worship of the true God** -- Deuteronomy 12:2-5 -- Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods....you must not worship the LORD your God in their way. But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose...to put his Name there for his dwelling.

b. **Unplanned worship can lead to disorder and disagreements** -- 1 Corinthians 11:18 -- In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.

c. **Planned worship can ensure a useful experience for all worshipers** -- 1 Corinthians 14:26 -- What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

d. **We should worship the God of the Universe with proper humility, dignity and honor** -- 1 Chronicles 16:29 -- Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

Hebrews 12:28 -- Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

5. Our worship imitates heavenly worship

Nehemiah 9:6 -- You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Revelation. 5:8-14

6. The most important aspect of worship is that God shares with us his Word and Sacrament.

Psalm 119:105 -- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

1 Corinthians 11:26 -- For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Discussion Questions

1. The God of all creation comes down from heaven to be with us in our Sunday services. What effect should that have on:

the way we take care of our church building?

our preparation for each service?

our conduct during church services?

our attendance?

2. Read Rev. 5:8-14. Here John receives a glimpse of a worship service around God's throne in heaven. Compare it with our Sunday services.

How is the music the same or different?

How is leadership and participation similar or different?

How is "body language" similar or different?

3. In what ways are our Sunday services a "taste of heaven"?

4. If we knew a famous person would be attending our church some Sunday, how might our preparations and actions be different? How does this relate to God's presence in church each Sunday?

5. Some people think everyone should dress up in their "Sunday best" for church since they are going to God's house. Others think it is best to dress more normal so that everyone will feel comfortable and so that nobody will stay home because they don't have good enough clothes. With which attitude do you agree?

6. Some people prefer to use the King James translation of the Bible in their church services. They say that the "thees" and "thous" are more respectful and remind us that we are worshiping the God of heaven. Others say that using such language makes our services out-dated and hard to understand. How might a congregation address these concerns?

7. How would you answer a person who says he doesn't need to go to church to worship God, because he goes to the forest or mountains and feels closer to God there?

8. In Exodus 29:42 (3b above) what is the importance of the word *regularly*?

9. What are the advantages or disadvantages of having a special church building as the place where one normally meets others for worship?

10. When Christians meet together for worship, is their main job listening to the pastor? How does going to church differ from going to the movies?

Lesson 5

Worship can be spontaneous, but planned structured worship has advantages.

1. Everything a Christian does is worship.

Romans 12:1 -- Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.

2. But certain aspects of worship can be taught

a. Who to worship -- 2 Kings 17:28 -- So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the LORD.

b. How to worship in God's way -- Isaiah 29:13 -- The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."

3. Worship can be planned to include a variety of body language

a. **Standing** -- Exodus 33:10 -- Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent.

b. **Bowing down** -- Genesis 24:48 -- And I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. [NOTE: To differentiate themselves from worshipers of pagan statues, early Christians do not seem to have "bowed down" in worship after Jesus' ascension.]

c. **Kneeling** -- 2 Chronicles 29:29 -- When the offerings were finished, the king and everyone present with him knelt down and worshiped.

d. **Bowing the head** -- Chronicles 29:30 -- King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed their heads and worshiped.

4. Worship can be planned for different times and occasions

1 Samuel 1:19 -- Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah.

Luke 1:10 -- And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

5. Worship can be planned as a complete experience emphasizing Christ's message to us.

Our Confession of sins to God

God's announcement of forgiveness to us

God's message to us in the Scriptures

Our response in prayer and song

God's encouragement to us in the sermon

Our confession of faith in God in the creeds

Our gifts to God in the offering

God's gifts to us in the Sacraments

6. Three important benefits of using a liturgy

- a. The use of a liturgy is a good way of ensuring a complete worship experience.
- b. Except for the sermon, the liturgy can be conducted even without a highly trained leader.
- c. Children and adults who can't read or can't read well can memorize parts of the liturgy and still take part in it.

Discussion Questions

1. Give examples of when you or Christians you know were moved to spontaneous worship of God.
2. Give examples of special occasions (besides Sundays) when planned group worship might be appropriate in your church.
3. Name and explain any different worship postures used in your church. Are there some postures that are inappropriate in your culture?
4. How do worship styles and postures vary between different Christian denominations? Are there important reasons why ours differs from others?
5. In your church, how are children or new members taught how to worship? Is there room for improvement in this area?
6. How can we avoid the improper worship which God criticizes in Isaiah 29:13?
7. Read again point 5, then answer these questions.
 - a. If we did not use a liturgy, which important parts of the worship experience might we forget? (You might think of services you have seen conducted by non-Lutheran churches.)
 - b. What are the advantages of having a pastor conduct the entire liturgy? Would there be advantages to having lay people assist in conducting the liturgy?
 - c. What parts of your congregation's liturgy could non-readers learn and take part in?

Lesson 6

God is pleased with our humble worship, but worship is a gift to God and therefore should be the best we can offer.

1. God is pleased with our most humble worship and offerings.

Luke 18:13-14 -- But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Mark 12:42-43 -- But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.

2. Yet God is not pleased with improper worship

Worship is improper when it is just **empty words** -- Matthew 15:8-9 -- These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me uselessly; their teachings are but rules taught by men.

Worship is improper when it is directed to a **false God** -- Deuteronomy 12:31 -- You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

Worship is improper when it contains a **false message** -- Colossians 2:23 -- Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Worship is improper when the worshiper is **leading an ungodly life**. -- Amos 5:21-24 -- I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings..., I will not accept them.... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

3. Therefore we should worship carefully:

so that we worship the true God only
so that everything said and done conveys a biblical message,
so that our worship is not disrespectful or just empty words, and
so that our lives reflect our love and praise of God.

4. God asks us to give our best gifts to Him as a sign of our love. Therefore, our worship should be giving God our best in preparation, music, sermons, prayers, offerings and attention.

Malachi 1:8 -- When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

Discussion Questions

1. Some churches do not plan their services. They simply meet and "let the Holy Spirit lead them." Is this a more "spiritual" approach than planning worship ahead of time?

2. Our worship services follow a plan and usually contain most of the following elements. Number them to show the order in which they usually occur in your church. Then tell why each is planned into the service and why it is done in that order. (see Appendix 1, p.20)

- Confession of Faith (Creed)
- Prayers
- Blessing
- Lord's Supper
- Confession of Sins
- Lord's Prayer
- Sermon
- Scripture Readings
- Absolution (forgiveness of sins)
- Offering

3. From time to time your congregation probably has worship services that are "special" and do not come straight from the prepared services in the hymnal. Can you remember how you reacted to such services? What things did you like or not like about them?

4. People sometimes complain that the worship services in our hymnals becomes boring because we use them again and again. Can you think of ways that churches can keep that from happening and still have well planned worship?

Lesson 7

Worship is a universal experience but should reflect a Christian's culture.

1. Worship changed over the course of Bible history

a. Worship in Old Testament times was done with the music and instruments of Jewish culture -- Psalm 81:2 -- Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre.

b. Worship in New Testament times was changed to fit the language and culture of that time -- Acts 2:4 -- All of [the apostles] were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

2. God taught the Jewish Christians that their culture was no better than other cultures.

Acts 10:28 -- Peter said to Cornelius: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

3. Paul makes it clear that worship benefits people only if it is conducted in a language that people understand.

1 Corinthians 14:4,9,19 -- He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.... So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.... But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

4. The Bible pictures worship in heaven in ways that were understood to people of ancient times. However, the Bible makes it clear that people from every culture and language will worship God in heaven.

Revelation 7:9 -- After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

5. Since God normally influences the mind and emotions of Christians most intimately through the language and music with which they grow up, worship should, whenever possible, be conducted in that language and with culturally appropriate music.

Acts 2:7-11 -- Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

1 Corinthians 9:20-22 -- [Paul says:] To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.I became like one under the law...I became like one not having the law...I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

Discussion Questions

1. Name some musical instruments of the Jewish culture which were used in Bible times as part of worship.
2. Are there some musical instruments which would be inappropriate to use in your worship services today?
3. Every language continues to change. Some words are no longer used and understood. New words are added. What affect might this have on the Bible translations and other language which we use in our worship?
4. Would St. Paul include speaking in tongues (unknown languages) as part of a worship service? Explain your answer.
5. Point 4 says that the Bible pictured heaven in a way that Hebrew and Greek people could identify with. Luther once pictured heaven to his son as a place where children played, rode ponies and ate good things all days. How would you picture heaven to an 80-year old in you r culture? To a child?
6. Much of the liturgies in our hymn book reflect the culture of Western Europe. Most Lutheran congregations also use music, art and social customs which reflect European and American culture. Choose several of the following and describe in what ways they are or could be used in your church to reflect your culture?
 - musical tunes
 - musical instruments
 - the way the pastor, choirs, or worshipers dress
 - the length of the service
 - the design of the church building
 - the art used in the church building
 - the way the Scriptures are read
7. When Christianity enters a new culture, it will change and purify parts of that culture. What does this mean about the use of traditional music and arts in Christian worship?

Lesson 8

When we worship we fellowship with God and fellowship with other Christians.

1. Worship is foremost a communion or fellowship with God.

Exodus 24:5 -- Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD.

Deuteronomy 27:7 -- Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD your God.

1 Corinthians 1:9 -- God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

2. At the same time, we share our fellowship with God by enjoying fellowship with other believers.

1 John 1:3 -- We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

3. That fellowship with God and other believers becomes very personal in our joint worship services.

1 John 1:7 -- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

NOTE: Sharing our Lord's body and blood in Holy Communion is one of the most intimate types of fellowship we have. That is one reason for our caution in sharing the Lord's Supper with people who are not members of our own Lutheran church body.

4. Those who do not have true fellowship with God cannot have fellowship with us either.

2 Kings 17:41 -- Even while these people were **worshipping** the LORD, they were serving their idols.

John 1:6 -- If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

5. Our common worship and fellowship should only take place with other believers.

2 Corinthians 6:14 -- Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

1 Corinthians 5:2 -- And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the [unrepentant] man who did this [public sin]?

Discussion Questions

1. Read the Old Testament regulations for the fellowship offering in Lev. 7:11-22. Between which two parties is this offering to establish or maintain fellowship? What cause the breaking of fellowship so that an offering was necessary to restore it?

2. Which of the following would you enjoy doing with your closest friends?

- a. singing songs
- b. eating a meal
- c. praying
- d. doing things together

How do your answers apply to worship services in your church?

3. Which of the following would you like **least** to do with your worst enemy?

- a. go for a walk
- b. have a talk
- c. eat at his house
- d. sing a song

How does your answer apply to having fellowship with unbelievers in a worship service?

4. "Communion" is another word meaning "fellowship." In what way is Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper such an important form of fellowship?

5. Why do we allow unbelievers or people from other churches to come to our worship services, sing songs, etc., but not to have Holy Communion with us? (1 Corinthians 11:27 gives another reason from that mentioned above.)

APPENDIX 1:

A BRIEF OVERVIEW AND EXPLANATION OF THE MAIN LITURGIES IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Common Service (pages 15-25)	Word and Sacrament (pages 26-37)	Service of the Word (pages 38-51)	Explanation
Hymn	Hymn	Hymn	The service is begun with a song of praise to God.
Confession of Sins	Confession of Sins	Confession of Sins	The worshiper comes into God's house in humility, confessing his sin and unworthiness. The pastor announces God's forgiveness to the worshipers. Often the ancient Christian refrain "Lord have mercy" is sung in connection with the confession and absolution.
Lord Have Mercy	Absolution	Absolution	
Absolution	Lord Have Mercy		
Glory Be to God	O Lord our Lord	Oh, Taste and See	After hearing that God has forgiven his sin, the worshiper responds with a song of praise.
Prayer of the Day	Prayer of the Day	Prayer of the Day	The pastor speaks a prayer based on important thoughts for the season of the church year.
First Lesson	First Lesson	First Lesson	The first lesson for the day is usually a reading from the Old Testament, the second a reading from a New Testament letter, and the third a reading from one of the four Gospels. All the readings are selected to fit the season of the church year and to complement one another. Between the first two readings an appropriate Psalm is sung or said. Between the second and third readings comes a selected verse, or the Alleluia is sung.
Psalm of the Day	Psalm of the Day	Psalm of the Day	
Second Lesson	Second Lesson	Second Lesson	
Verse of the Day (or Alleluia)	Verse of the Day (or Alleluia)	Verse of the Day (or Alleluia)	
Gospel	Gospel	Gospel	

Common Service	Word and Sacrament	Service of the Word	Explanation
Creed	Hymn of the Day	Hymn of the Day	A hymn, often on the same subject as the sermon is sung. The pastor then proclaims God's Law and Gospel in his sermon. The worshipers confess their common faith by joining in the Apostles' or Nicene Creed (before or after the sermon).
Hymn of the Day	Sermon	Sermon	
Sermon	Creed	Creed	
Offering	Offering	Offering	The worshipers give their financial offerings to the Lord.
Prayer of the Church	Prayer of the Church	Prayer of the Church	A general prayer for all occasions is spoken by the pastor.
Lord's Prayer	Lord's Prayer	Lord's Prayer	The entire congregation joins in the Lord's Prayer.
Preface	Preface		A pastor and people greet each other and praise the Lord as they prepare to receive the Lord's body and blood.
Holy, Holy, Holy	Holy, Holy, Holy		An ancient hymn is used to praise the Lord for his goodness.
Words of Institution	Words of Institution		The Words of Institution remind the worshipers that they are following the Lord's command in this celebration and that they truly are receiving Jesus' true body and blood.
O Christ, Lamb of God	O Christ, Lamb of God		An ancient hymn reminds us of that Christ's death did take away our sins.
Distribution	Distribution		The worshipers receive Christ's body and blood.
Song of Simeon	Thanksgiving		The Song of Simeon is used to thank the Lord for the gift of his sacrament.
Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	A final prayer is spoken by the pastor.
Blessing	Blessing	Blessing	The pastor dismisses the worshipers with the blessing of God.

Appendix 2:

THE CHURCH YEAR

For over a thousand years, Christians have remembered the important events in Jesus' life by celebrating them in order in their Sunday worship services.

Season	Length and Time	Color	Significance
Advent	4 weeks (Nov.-Dec.)	Blue (or purple)	Advent means <i>coming</i> ; we prepare for Christ's birth and his second coming.
Christmas	12 days (Dec. 25- Jan. 6) Christmas Day is Dec. 25*	White	We celebrate Christ's birth
Epiphany	4-9 weeks (Jan. 6 -Mar.) Epiphany is Jan. 6; the first Sunday is the Baptism of our Lord ; the last Sunday is Transfiguration Sunday	Green (White on the first and last Sundays)	Epiphany means <i>revealing</i> . We celebrate Christ's being revealed to be the Savior of all people.
Lent	40 days (Feb.-Apr.) Begins with Ash Wed. ; ends with Holy Week (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday)	Purple (Black or purple on Ash Wed.; black on Good Fri.)	During Lent we meditate on our Lord's suffering and death for us
Easter	50 days (Mar.-May) Includes Ascension on 40th day	White (or Gold on Easter Day)	Easter is our celebration of Christ's resurrection**
Pentecost	23-28 weeks (May-Dec.) Begins with Pentecost Sunday , followed by Trinity Sunday ; the remaining period is often called the "non-festival" part of the church year; Oct. 31 is Reformation Day	Green (Red on Pentecost and Reformation Days and 3rd last Sun.; White on Trinity Sun. and last 2 Sundays)***	Pentecost recalls the giving of the Holy Spirit, his blessings on the church, and our life of sanctification

* Some churches follow another early custom of dating Christ's birth to Jan. 6.

** Christians chose to worship on Sunday as a weekly celebration of Christ's resurrection (cf. Revelation 1:10).

*** In our WELS churches, the last 4 weeks of the church year are used to meditate on the end times and Christ's second coming.

APPENDIX 3:

COLORS AND THEIR MEANING

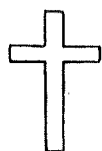
The following chart shows the colors most commonly used in the church. These colors are often used for the *paraments* (cloths which decorate the altar, pulpit and lectern). They are also the colors used for the stole which a pastor may wear. They can also be used in seasonal banners and other permanent decorations in the church (stained glass windows, wall paintings, etc.)

Color	Meaning
White	God, Purity, Eternity, Joy
Black	Sin, Darkness, Death
Red	Blood, Martyrdom, Fire, Zeal
Green	Life, Growth, Nourishment
Blue	Sky, Hope
Purple	Royalty, Mourning, Repentance
Gold	Kingship, Riches, Victory

APPENDIX 4:

SYMBOLS AND ART

Symbols and pictures have always been used in the Christian church and in connection with our worship. Pictures could tell Bible stories to Christians who could not read or who did not own Bibles. Symbols could be artistic reminders of Bible truths. Below are shown some of the most common Christian symbols and what they most commonly represent.



Cross =
Christ's death for us



Fish = Christ or Christian
(Greek word for fish is made up
of beginning letters of Jesus
Christ, God's Son, Savior)



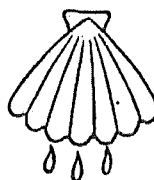
Chi-Rho =
Jesus Christ
(the first 2 letters of the word
Christ in Greek)



A and W = God as Eternal
(Alpha and Omega, the first
and last letters of the Greek
alphabet; cf. Rev. 22:13)



IHS = Jesus
(the first 3 letters of the name
Jesus in Greek)



Shell = Baptism
(shell was used to pour
water)



INRI = Jesus Christ
King of the Jews (The first
letters of the 4 words in
Latin)



Cup = Lord's Supper



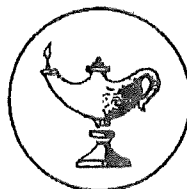
Triangle (or 3 interlocking
circles) = the Trinity (3
sides but 1 triangle)



Dove = Holy Spirit
(from story of Jesus'
baptism)



Hand coming from heaven
= God the Father



Lamp = light of God's
Word



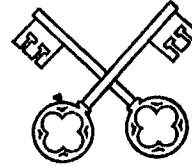
Dove with olive branch =
Peace which comes through
faith in Christ



Sword of the Spirit =
preaching of Law and Gospel



Crown and Cross
The eternal reward for those
faithful through suffering
(Revelation 2:10)



Keys = Church with its
power of the Keys
(lock and unlock heaven)



Butterfly = Resurrection



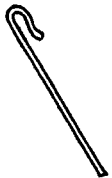
Ship = the Church



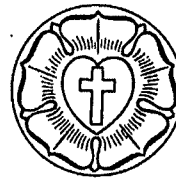
Lamb of God (Christ) with
a banner of victory



Anchor = Firm hope of
Salvation



Shepherd's rod = Jesus (the Good
Shepherd) or Pastors (who
shepherd God's flock on earth)



Luther Rose =
Martin Luther and the
Lutheran Church

APPENDIX 5:

THE PASTOR: HIS CLOTHING AND ACTIONS

CLOTHING

The clothing worn by a pastor has two main purposes:

1. It identifies him as a called minister of the Gospel
2. It hides the man and emphasizes his ministry

Originally, worship was more informal and the leaders did not wear any special clothing. However, once worship became formalized in the fifth century, it quickly became customary for the leaders of the worship service to wear special clothing.

Originally the most common garment was an *alb* -- a white linen robe reaching to the ankles. It had narrow sleeves and no collar. This eventually came to be worn over a *cassock* (the normal street attire of the day, usually a tighter fitting black robe) or over a looser, heavier *academic robe* (worn by medieval professors and teachers). After the Reformation, many Protestant clergymen stopped wearing the alb and just wore the black robe. For several centuries Lutheran pastors, however, continued to wear the alb.

A stole, a kind of colored scarf, also came to be worn over the alb or black robe. It was put around the back of the neck and fell to the knees. The color of the stole reflected the season of the church year (see the Church Year chart in Appendix 2).

ACTIONS

The pastor has two main roles during the church service.

1. He speaks God's Word to the congregation.
2. He leads the congregation in speaking to God

When speaking God's Word to his people, the pastor normally faces the people. When speaking for the people to God (leading prayer, etc.), he usually faces the altar which represents God's presence in the church building. When facing the altar, he may at times bow in order to show his reverence for God.

The pastor also makes certain symbolic gestures with his hands and arms. When he mentions the name of Christ, he often makes the sign of the cross to remind us of Christ's greatest action for us. At times he may spread out his arms with palms upraised as a sign of prayer to God. He may lift up his outstretched arms also as a sign of blessing. All of these actions are types of body language used to show the words being said.

