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1 • *The Pastor*

WHO MORE THAN THE MINISTER touches people in their most solemn and sacred moments? Whether he is asked to dedicate a baby, unite young adults in marriage, counsel a hurting father or bury an aged saint, the pastor has the holy privilege of ministering the grace of Christ Jesus to those he lives among. Therefore:

The pastor must see to his spirit. He must keep the fires of devotion to his God burning brightly. The Word must be his delight and prayer his chief business. Only as he keeps in contact with the Throne can he be God's emissary.

He must avoid empty professionalism—the bane of every minister—at all cost. His ministry is important to those who look to him for help; it must be important to him, too.

In his concern for the household of God, the pastor must not neglect his own household. If he has a wife, the marriage vows he mediates to others are the vows he himself took. If he has children, they are as sacred a trust as any other in his parish—and more so because the responsibility is uniquely his.

The pastor should be careful about his personal appearance. Cleanliness may not be next to godliness, but it ranks nearby. Whatever the limitations of his wardrobe, his clothes should enhance the dignity of his calling. Nothing on or about him should clamor for attention.

The minister must also have the proper manner. Gravity need not be gloom, and seriousness is not necessarily sadness. The pastor's manner will reflect the importance of the occasion. The King's business calls for a kingly bearing. Quiet reserve is always the mark of a Christian man. The pastor should act in such a way that no one will ever regret having sought his assistance. Manner is the sum total of manners.

Those who are called by Jesus Christ to His ministry are called to be good ministers. No man could be more. Who dares to be less?

2 • *The Worship Service*

THE WORSHIP SERVICE CREATES an atmosphere where individual believers interact with a transcendent God within a covenant community. Worship forms may vary with cultures or generations, but the content remains unchanged. At least four principles regulate the content of the worship service.

1. *Worship is not something we attend; it is something we do. It is a corporate gathering to exalt our worthy God for His mighty acts of salvation.* True worship, therefore, is participative. We gather not primarily to receive but to give. Worship is a heart attitude to be expressed in word and act. It is larger than any of the individual elements of the worship service. It is all the facets of the service in relation to the hearts of the worshipers.

2. *What we do in worship must be grounded in the Scriptures.* The Bible is our only rule of faith and practice. Both Old and New Testaments serve as authority and source for our times of worship. From these sacred sources we glean psalms, hymns, doxologies, benedictions, confessions, prayers, ascriptions of glory and patterns of worship.

3. *What we do in worship must always be oriented toward Christ—particularly in His redemptive work.* The early church centered its preaching and worship in what we call the *kerygma*—the proclamation of Christ—His birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection,

ascension. Worship praises God the Father for this redemption in Jesus Christ His Son and reenacts it in the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

4. *The forms of our worship are rooted in both the Jewish temple/synagogue and in the early church.* Our worship comprises both the commonality of those forms and their distinctives. Our worship is rooted in the liturgy and pageantry of temple worship, but also in the spontaneity of the early church. Worship is both sacramental and free.

AN ORDER FOR "FREE" WORSHIP

Preparation: As worshipers arrive, they may be given intercessory suggestions for quiet prayer. Worship choruses may be sung spontaneously or under a leader's direction. If spontaneously, bear in mind that visitors unfamiliar with the songs may feel estranged. Printed Scriptures help each worshiper focus on a particular theme for the worship time.

Worshipers may be called to self-examination and personal confession through the use of a hymn (sung or unsung), the naming of one of God's attributes or a specific Scripture.

Hymns of praise: Psalms set to music or Scripture songs may be committed to memory and sung. Hymns may be announced or spontaneously begun by the leader or worshipers. Both the Scripture songs and the hymns should point worshipers to God and His activity and attributes.

Scripture: Scriptures may be assigned to members of the congregation to read—or they may be read spontaneously. If assigned, use the whole Bible—Psalms and other Old Testament portions and pas-

sages from the Gospels, the Acts and the Letters. Members may be asked to quote memorized Scriptures that call attention to some aspect of the person and work of Christ Jesus.

The worship leader may wish to acknowledge that these Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, demanding our undivided attention. They have the power of God through the Holy Spirit to convey truth, correction and the assurance of eternal life.

Intercessory prayer: The pastor may lead the congregation in prayer for needs within the local fellowship of believers and ministries around the world. He may on occasion call on any who so desire to offer spontaneous prayers. Or he may lead a time of directed prayer, asking people to pray silently or audibly for specific needs, which he announces one by one. But remember, for the initiated, directed prayer can be an effective change of pace; for strangers, it can be awkward and meaningless.

Offering: The offering, frequently regarded by pastor and congregation as an interruption, should be seen rather as an important part of congregational worship. Even as the members present themselves to God in His sanctuary, so they present their offerings—the fruit of their daily labor—as a love gift to God and His kingdom work. An offering receptacle positioned so worshipers may place their gifts as they enter the sanctuary is customary in some churches. But certainly the corporate reception of tithes and offerings at a given point in the worship service can and should be a fitting act of worship. On occasion, the offering may be placed after the sermon as a congregational response to God's Word.

Sermon: Several elements may be incorporated into the preparation for the Word or the declaration of the Word, including drama, storytelling or media aids such as slides, videos or graphics. The communications revolution, which has moved from the ancient method of oral presentation to the contemporary availability of audiovisual aids, permits a broad assortment of tools to be employed in the presentation of God's Word. There can be no substitute, however, for anointed preaching with power.

Response: Every sermon should call for some listener response. The audience may be given opportunity to respond in a variety of ways, but each worshiper should be specifically challenged to respond.

An evangelistic sermon should be followed by an invitation to repent and confess Christ publicly as Savior and Lord. The appropriate response may be to personal commitment, with an invitation to the worshipers to demonstrate right then their assent. Depending on the sermon theme, the response may be to write a note of encouragement to someone, to attend or join a prayer group, to make a faith promise to missions or to read privately some portion of Scripture.

The Lord's Table: If communion is to be observed, it is appropriate to schedule it as a part of the response. (See chapter 3, "Communion.")

Close: A hymn or Scripture song in keeping with the theme of the service, followed possibly by a benediction, will fitly conclude the worship time.

AN ORDER FOR MORE FORMAL WORSHIP

Preparation: Scriptures may be included in the printed Order of Worship for meditation before the service formally begins. An appropriate prelude of hymns and gospel songs will help to set the tone of the service. A painting, banners, projected pictures or other nonverbal forms of communication may be used to focus the attention of the worshipers.

Announcements: These should not be considered unimportant. Rather the participatory events that the announcements describe are often the sinews that bind the body together.

Call to worship: The choir may call the congregation to worship through music, or the pastor or worship leader may do so with an appropriate Scripture or by leading the congregation in a unison or responsive reading of a printed declaration.

Hymn of praise: The opening hymn should speak to the nature or attributes of God and should be addressed to Him.

Ascriptions of praise: These may be personal, planned witness statements, or the pastor may use Scripture selections in keeping with the theme of the day. The congregation may sing the Gloria.

Prayer of invocation: This may be a Scripture invocation (see following pages) or a brief prayer in the pastor's own words invoking the manifest presence of God in the worship experience. On occasion, individuals within the congregation may be asked in advance to voice brief invocations.

Old Testament Scripture: The pastor or lay

leader will choose a passage supportive of the theme of the worship service.

Music: A choral anthem or other special music may be included at this point.

Offering: Worshipers are given opportunity to present their tithes and offerings to God. An instrumental or vocal ministry may accompany the reception of the offering.

Doxology and prayer of dedication

New Testament Scripture: The pastor or lay leader will read a New Testament passage supportive of the day's worship theme.

Pastoral prayer: The pastoral prayer is opportunity for the minister, in his role of priest, to bear before God the praise of his people as well as to intercede for those members with particular needs. Conscientiously carried out, it can be a highlight of the service and a lasting benediction for the worshipers.

Special music: A song well executed and appropriate to the theme of the service can prepare the congregation for what follows and permit the pastor a brief time of quiet before he stands to minister the Word to his people.

Sermon

Response: The response may be a corporate recitation of the Apostles' Creed, a litany prepared and printed in the bulletin or an invitation to a public confession of faith or of dedication. A public witness, asked for well in advance, supportive of the sermon theme, may be offered by a member of the congregation. Some churches might even use drama to act out the response in life situations.

Hymn of affirmation**Prayer of thanksgiving**

Charge: The pastor, in his charge to the congregation, may repeat the major theme of the worship time.

Benediction: See the end of this chapter for a collection of benedictions.

Postlude: The congregation may sing a chorus, or the organist may play a selection.

HELPS FOR WORSHIP

Use of color in worship services: Throughout history, worship has been associated with symbols—crosses, altar Bibles, center pulpits, communion tables. Likewise, colors traditionally have been used to set the mood of the worship service. Colors that take on significance in the Christian calendar include:

Violet, the color used by kings in mourning. It symbolizes the majesty of Christ in His humility. It is used by the church for the penitential seasons and, traditionally, was also used during Advent.

Blue, which is gradually replacing violet for Advent. Blue is the color of royalty, and therefore fittingly symbolizes the coming of Him who was born King.

White, the color of light. It symbolizes divinity, purity, victory. It is used for Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Trinity Sunday.

Green, the common color of nature in the freshness of bloom. Symbolic of Christian life and growth, it is used during the many Sundays of the Trinity season.

Red, associated with blood and spirit. It is used on Pentecost and Reformation Sundays and festivals such as Thanksgiving, anniversaries, dedications. It

symbolizes the zeal of the church, and it is used to commemorate the martyrs who sealed their testimony with their blood.

Black, the color of darkness and death. It is used on Good Friday.

Calls to worship

Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.

(Psalm 46:10)

Exalt the LORD our God

and worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.

(Psalm 99:9)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their
story—

those he redeemed from the hand of
the foe.

(Psalm 107:1-2)

Praise the LORD, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.

For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD
endures forever.

Praise the LORD.

(Psalm 117)

The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice and be glad.

(Psalm 118:24)

I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

(Psalm 122:1)

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.

...

Let everything that has breath praise
the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

(Psalm 150:1, 6)

The LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him.

(Habakkuk 2:20)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you rest.”

(Matthew 11:28)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

(Colossians 3:1-2)

Invocations: *These prayers may be easily expanded to include the entire congregation by changing the singular “I,” “me” and “my” to “we,” “us” and “our” and modifying the other parts of speech to show agreement.*

But I, by your great love,
 can come into your house;
in reverence I bow down
 toward your holy temple.
Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness
 because of my enemies—
 make your way straight before me.
 (Psalm 5:7-8)

In you, LORD my God, I put my trust.
 I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
 nor let my enemies triumph over me.
No one who hopes in you
 will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
 who are treacherous without cause.
 (Psalm 25:1-3)

Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
Remember, LORD, your great
mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
(Psalm 25:4-6)

LORD, I love the house where you live,
the place where your glory dwells.
.
.
.
My feet stand on level ground;
in the great assembly I will praise the
LORD.
(Psalm 26:8, 12)

I will praise you, LORD, among the
nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
For great is your love, reaching to the
heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.
(Psalm 57:9-11)

You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
(Psalm 63:1-4)

How lovely is your dwelling place,
LORD Almighty!
My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God. . . .
Blessed are those who dwell in your
house;
they are ever praising you.
(Psalm 84:1-2, 4)

Hear my prayer, LORD;
listen to my cry for mercy.
When I am in distress, I call to you,
because you answer me.

Among the gods there is none like you,
LORD;
no deeds can compare with yours.
All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you,
LORD;
they will bring glory to your name.
For you are great and do marvelous
deeds;
you alone are God.

(Psalm 86:6-10)

Offertory sentences

Sacrifice thank offerings to God,
fulfill your vows to the Most High,
and call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will
honor me.

(Psalm 50:14-15)

Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of
nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and
strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his
name;
bring an offering and come into his
courts.

(Psalm 96:7-8)

Honor the LORD with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;
then your barns will be filled to
overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with
new wine.

(Proverbs 3:9-10)

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough to store it.”

(Malachi 3:10)

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income.

(1 Corinthians 16:2a)

Benedictions

The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

(Romans 16:25-27)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

(2 Corinthians 13:14)

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Galatians 1:3-5)

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church

and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

(Ephesians 3:20-21)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(1 Timothy 1:17)

Now 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)

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm

and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

(1 Peter 5:10-11)

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

(Jude 24-25)

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

(Revelation 1:5b-6)

OCCASIONAL SUNDAYS

Throughout the church year, there are not only the universally recognized religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas, but other significant days—Mother's Day, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, to name a few, as well as national holidays and even local commemorations of significance to the church.

If the minister suits a sermon to all of these other occasional days, he will have few remaining Sundays to proclaim the whole counsel of God to his

people. He should therefore take care that these occasional Sundays do not intrude on his systematic exposition of God's Word. If he preaches a message to mothers one year, he may wish to preach to fathers the next year—and to children the next. If his sermon one year is in keeping with Independence Day, he may decide to forgo a similar theme the next. It is possible to recognize special occasions in the course of a church service without devoting sermons to them.

The minister has a God-given responsibility to declare all of God's Word (Acts 20:27), and he will look critically at any occasion or program that deprives his congregation of such comprehensive preaching.