

Lesson 9

Your New Community: The Church Part Two

“To him be all glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!” Amen (Ephesians 3:21).

An important part of living in community for disciples of Christ is corporate worship. The Old Testament gives the model as it describes public worship in a number of passages. “Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the LORD” (2 Chronicles 20:18).

1. What do you think Jehoshaphat is expressing by his posture and form of worship?

The New Testament does not prescribe certain prayer postures or forms for worship. It seems that variety is encouraged. Nevertheless, at times it is appropriate to bow down in reverence to an all powerful, holy, and majestic God. “And when he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed” (Acts 20:26). The Old Testament describes other forms of worship. “The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played” (2 Chronicles 29:28). Psalms repeatedly calls the people to corporate worship.

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care... (Psalms 95:1-7).

List six expressions of worship mentioned in Psalm 95:1-7.

2. _____.

3. _____.

4. _____.

5. _____.

6. _____.

7. _____.

List six reasons to worship God from Psalms 95:1-7.

8. _____.
9. _____.
10. _____.
11. _____.
12. _____.
13. _____.

In the New Testament, Jesus intended the church to be a corporate body of worship (John 4:23). Paul gives instruction to the Corinthians concerning their conduct in worship and their obvious lack of concern for each individual (1 Corinthians 12-14). The context suggests that the problem manifested itself in public worship services, showing that the church modeled corporate worship after worship in the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews emphasized the importance of gathering together (Hebrews 10:25). The author may have had in mind meeting together for fellowship, Bible study, partaking of communion, and prayer. These are all elements of the worship service. Prayer most certainly includes praise, adoration, and thanksgiving.

Christians believe that Christ instituted certain rites which serve as visible signs of God's saving grace. Many call these rites ordinances, since Christ ordered them to be observed. The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. These disciples declare to the church and to the world that they have died with Christ and that they have also been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4).

Christians recognize Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper, as a commemoration of Christ's suffering and death. Christians believe that Jesus established the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27). Most recognize the necessity to repeat the ceremony regularly. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the fellowship that believers have with the Lord and with one another. All Christians who partake of the Lord's Supper recognize the sacramental value of participating. It provides a means of grace and opportunity for spiritual growth. The symbols express our sharing of the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4), memorialize his suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26), and prophesy his second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The Holy Spirit gives gifts for the fellowship, life, and ministry of the church. The Apostle Paul explains that diversity, not uniformity, characterizes a healthy church, and he stresses the need for diversity within unity (1 Corinthians 12:4-31). It does not seem

like Paul provides us with a complete or exhaustive list of spiritual gifts. Paul gives three lists of gifts (12:8-11; 28; 29-30). There is some overlapping in the lists. The lists should be understood as examples and callings of the Spirit. How can there be a limit to his graces that are available for believers? The list is merely representative of the diversity of the Spirit's manifestations. Paul gives a considerable list so that the Corinthians will stop being so narrow minded in their own emphasis.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul teaches believers to exercise gifts with love and concern for all members of the body. The individual who speaks in tongues speaks to God (14:2). His spirit is edified, but without interpretation the group receives no benefit. Since speaking in tongues accompanies the baptism in the Holy Spirit, believers in Corinth found it easy to exercise the gift of tongues by faith in the congregation, neglecting other gifts and thereby neglecting the needs of other members. The Spirit gives gifts for the edification of the entire church. When the Spirit edifies the body he edifies each and every member. Likewise, as the Spirit ministers to members individually, the whole body is edified.

Spiritual gifts provide supernatural enablement for believers to minister not only to the body of Christ, but to unbelievers also. The Spirit's ministry to unbelievers mainly has to do with convincing and convicting. The Spirit will convict the world of sin, that is, unbelief, convince sinners of the righteousness that is only found in Jesus Christ, and convince the world of certain judgment (John 16:8-11).

But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

One worker who has ministered among Muslims for many years testifies concerning the value of spiritual gifts for drawing unbelievers:

Preaching Christ in the Power of the Holy Spirit gets Muslim's attention and confirms Christ's claims. I know of Muslims who came to Christ because of the work of the gifts of the Spirit. Fadhila was attracted to the church because people there spoke in tongues! And even before she accepted the Lord in her life, she expressed her amazement at such a miracle and once she said to me: "To speak in a language that you never learned is really a witness that God is in you!" Today she is a strong believer and is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

14. What will people who minister in the gifts of the Spirit witness concerning Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:3)?

There are different kinds of gifts and ministries but only one Lord and one God (12:4).

15. Who receives the manifestation (this means a spiritual gift) of the Spirit (12:7)? _____

16. Who is to benefit (12:7)? _____

17. Who determines who receives which gift (12:11)? _____

In a previous lesson we discussed 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. We discussed the importance of every member of the body. In this context you can see that every member needs to be ministered to, and every member needs to be used by the Holy Spirit in ministry. Pray and ask the Spirit about which gift or gifts he wants to give you to minister to the body. Read 12:27-31. The questions are rhetorical (12:29-30). Not all people have any one particular gift, and conversely we can deduct that no individual possesses all of the gifts.

18. What does Paul say disciples should do (12:31)? _____

“Eagerly desire” includes praying and asking God to be used in spiritual gifts.

Chapter 13 is not just an interlude between chapters 12 and 14. This great chapter about love instructs disciples how the gifts are to be exercised. When they are used in love, they are used to benefit others. Disciples minister in the gifts out of compassion and concern for those who are in need.

Chapter 14 begins with the same exhortation that chapter 12 ended with. Paul reemphasizes the need to desire and pray for spiritual gifts. Misuse of the gifts by some should not discourage others to desire to use the gifts correctly.

19. When one speaks in tongues, he or she speaks to (14:2) _____

When disciples speak in tongues, they speak mysteries with their spirits (14:2), and in private worship praying in tongues benefits them.

20. Speaking in tongues without interpretation edifies (14:4) _____

Notice three important things:

(1) From the context we conclude that no gifts are greater than others. As all members are important, all gifts are needed. What then, are the “greater gifts” spoken of in 12:31? Most Pentecostal scholars agree that whatever gift is needed at the time is the greatest. Spiritual gifts are to meet the needs of the members of the body and the body as a whole.

(2) Chapters 12 and 14 are not diminishing the importance of the gift of tongues. They are merely saying that in public worship, speaking with understanding, that is, prophecy, is better than tongues. If the gift of tongues is accompanied by the gift of interpretation, it is equally beneficial to prophecy for the body.

(3) The rhetorical question, “Do all speak in tongues?” (12:30) refers to the gift of speaking in tongues as used in the public worship service. All disciples should pray in tongues in private devotions. Paul said that he spoke in tongues more than all of the Corinthians (14:18). He also tells them that he wishes that they all spoke in tongues (14:5). It would be better that they prophesy in the public worship service unless there is interpretation, but this does not change the fact that disciples should pray in tongues regularly in private.

What are the nine gifts of the Spirit listed in 12:8-10?

- 21. _____.
- 22. _____.
- 23. _____.
- 24. _____.
- 25. _____.
- 26. _____.
- 27. _____.
- 28. _____.
- 29. _____.

What gifts are listed in 12:28?

- 30. _____.
- 31. _____.
- 32. _____.
- 33. _____.
- 34. _____.
- 35. _____.
- 36. _____.
- 37. _____.

What gifts are listed in 12:29-30?

38. _____.

39. _____.

40. _____.

41. _____.

42. _____.

43. _____.

44. _____.

45. Memory Verses:

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. (Psalms 95:6-7)

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24)

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever.” The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Revelation 5:13-14)

46. Action:

As a disciple of Christ you must obey him and follow him in water baptism. Your testimony will be loud and clear, “I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.” If you have not been attending church, start to worship, fellowship, and minister in a local church. Join that body and support it with your attendance, prayer, fellowship, and finances. The church is supported only as believers pay tithes and give offerings. If you have not been receiving communion, start participating. As the pastor explains the service, allow the rich meaning to bless, nourish, and encourage you. Let the symbolism remind you of the Lord’s work and your participation as a member in the body of Christ. Finally, if you have not thought about the gifts of the Spirit for ministry, study Paul’s letters and pray about what God wants to do through you and for you. Receive the gift or gifts he has for you by faith, and begin exercising those gifts so that you can fulfill your part as a member of the body.

47. Rethink the Lesson:

- Form and posture are not as important as worshiping God freely in spirit and in truth.
- Disciples should participate in the ordinances of the church.
- Spiritual gifts provide supernatural enablement for disciples to minister to the body.
- Disciples should ask God to give them the gifts he wants them to have.

Answers to Lesson 9:

1. Reverence, submission, your answer.
2. Sing for joy.
3. Shout aloud.
4. Thanksgiving
5. Extol with music and song.
6. Bow down in worship.
7. Kneel before the Lord our maker
8. He is the Rock of our salvation.
9. He is a great God.
10. He is the great King above gods.
11. He is the creator and sustainer of the universe (4 and 5).
12. He is our God.
13. He cares for us like a shepherd.
14. Jesus is Lord.
15. Each one.
16. The common good, in other words the body.
17. The Spirit.
18. Eagerly desire the greater gifts.
19. God.
20. Him or herself.
21. Message of wisdom.
22. Message of knowledge.
23. Faith.
24. Gifts of healing.
25. Miraculous powers.
26. Prophecy.
27. Distinguishing between spirits.
28. Speaking in different kinds of tongues.
29. The interpretation of tongues.
30. Apostles.
31. Prophets.
32. Teachers.
33. Workers of miracles.
34. Those having gifts of healing.
35. Those able to help others.
36. Those with gifts of administration.
37. Those speaking in different kinds of tongues.
38. Apostles.
39. Prophets.
40. Teachers.
41. Work miracles.
42. Gifts of healing.
43. Speak in tongues.
44. Interpret.