

How To Enjoy The Services

by Dee Bowman

There is no logical reason for not enjoying the worship services. They should be a source of comfort to us, as well as a strong influence on our lives. Good worship services should provide hope, strengthen ties, broaden influences, settle disturbed minds, and bring consolation to the disconsolate. I was just thinking recently about some ways I might implement that would make the worship services more meaningful to me, and thus more helpful. Maybe they might help you, too.

Prepare early. Far too few of us are ready to worship when it's time. We get here right on time (or, in some cases, a few minutes late), then it takes 12-15 minutes to settle down and begin to appreciate what is being said and done. Good worship begins on Saturday, not Sunday. I believe I will be a better, more dedicated worshiper, if I pray about the coming Sunday worship on Saturday night.

Rest a little. Any kind of meditation—and worship is inseparably connected to meditation—takes a clear mind, one that is not cluttered with the pressures of daily duties and chores. It is appropriate to good worship to be still for awhile as a prerequisite to the actual worship. “Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still,” the Psalmist said, (4:4). “Be still and know that I am God,” he said (46:10).

Be sympathetic. We are all mortal and we all make mistakes. Those who are doing the announcements make mistakes. Those who lead the songs do. Those who preach certainly do. Be sympathetic instead of critical as they try their best to lead us in our worship. Instead of allowing mistakes to lead us away, let them lead us near to Him. “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditations,” David said (Psalm 5:1). Notice how he said give ear to my words and consider my meditations. Those who make the mistakes are likely doing the best they can. And with God, that's enough (Matt. 25:14-30).

Learn to listen. One of the best tools Satan employs is causing people not to hear. What is the song saying? What was the sentiment of the prayer? What were the major points of the sermon? The devil doesn't cause you to rebel against the worship services, he just destroys its effectiveness by putting stumbling blocks in the way of your hearing. It is no accident that the first parable Jesus told had to do with hearing (Luke 8, see particularly vs. 18), for it is the key to acceptable worship. When the wise man told us to be careful how we go to the house of God (Eccles. 5:1), he said, “be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools.”

Take part. God never said pray well, He said pray. He never said sing well, He said sing. We should take care to remember that God doesn't need anything. Nothing we can do can add to what He already is. But he does want something. He wants your heart. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart," said Peter (1 Pet. 3:15). And worship is the true way to express to him the filial feelings of your heart, to give Him the special place He so richly deserves. Sing as if you sang well. Pray as if you were a true orator. Meditate in quiet appreciation as if it were your last time to do so. When these things are implemented, worship will be a blessing to you and a sacrifice to God.

Be a sponge. Soak it up, ever last bit of it, every tasty morsel. If you truly participate and if you really listen, if you resolve to get involved and truly worship Him, you will find an inexpressible bliss and a "peace that passeth comprehension" (Phil. 4:7). Being interested is not a happenstance; you decide to do it. Being concerned is an intellectual enterprise, not just something that happens. Decide to be filled. Attend with a view toward getting the most out of the services and you will.

Look up, not out. Far too many people are concerned about who is present, what they are wearing, what they think. That's looking out. Far too many people forget to look up. If you can learn to look up you will be impressed with what you see. If you want a true perspective of how small you are, look up at the sky. If you want to see clearly the dwelling place of God, look up at the heavens. They speak a message of power and grandeur. They speak a message of regalness and splendorous attributes and a truly benevolent Nature. They speak the message of God (Psalm 24). Together they speak the right language, the most effective tongue, the most important words ever uttered, for they declare the God of our salvation and the power of His deliverance (Psalm 19:1-3; 7-11).

Worship is one of the great privileges of man. Let us do so today with reverence and piety.