

Christian Doctrine

#1 - As we consider the topic of public worship, three scripture passages will provide us an initial summary of three dimensions of public worship.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God (Colossians 3:16).

Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day (Psalm 96:1-2).

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 (Hebrews 10:25).

#2 - Three dimensions of public worship are:

- 1) God gives to us (Word [including hymn content], sacrament, benediction)
- 2) We give to God (responses of praise, prayers, songs of worship)
- 3) Mutual encouragement (building each other up in the faith, hymnody, creeds)

#3 - It is in public worship that more believers gather than at any other time to do what believers do more than any other thing, that is, to receive from God and to give to God. This truth by itself makes the congregation’s worship its most important activity. But worship holds the church’s greatest interest for other reasons as well. Worship affords the best opportunity for believers to encourage each other with the Word. It sets a full banquet of the means of grace and marshals all of God’s created gifts for the praise of his grace. Worship repeats for Christians the truths about Christ that are essential for Christian faith and it sets a pattern and a pace for the Christian life. No other congregational activity affords such a variety or such fullness of receiving and response.

#4 - At public worship, believers of all ages, shapes and sizes join to offer God their mutual response of faith. Worship intends to bring the church together, not to separate it by age groups, financial status, or social circumstances. And the responses these united believers bring cover a multitude of life activities which are common to all. They praise, honor, and glorify God. They confess their sins to him and affirm their faith in him. They pray for themselves, for fellow believers, for the earth, the state, and the creations, and for those who are without faith. They offer to God a portion of the gifts they have received from the riches of his grace. They listen, they eat and drink, and they long for the perfect worship of heaven. In public worship, the body of Christ does in summary fashion exactly the same spiritual things that each of its members does on every day of the year. (Slides 3,4 – Prof. James Tiefel, excerpts from [Christian Worship: Manual](#))

#5 - At one time many churches would have a sign in front that displayed the worship schedule. It would read something like: Divine Service – 10:00 A.M. “Divine Service” is a very good way to remember what is happening at a worship service. Through scripture lessons and sacrament and benediction, God is serving people with the things they need to have their faith in Christ nourished. As God gives in this way, God’s people respond by giving back to God their prayers, praise and offerings. God’s giving begins and sustains the cycle of worship.

#6 - As we give consideration to the form of our public worship, a couple features of Old Testament worship stand out. While we no longer have prescribed sacrifices or festivals, while we no longer have a priesthood determined by genealogy or priestly clothes tailored according to God’s precise instructions, we do retain the Old Testament hymnal, the book of Psalms, and we continue to devote ourselves to the public reading of scripture (1 Timothy 4:13), as was still the case in the synagogue service in Jesus’ day.

#7 - Once Christ had fulfilled the prophecies to which so many Old Testament worship forms had pointed forward and had carried out the rescue of all sinners by becoming a curse for them, public worship came into a freedom from prescribed forms. The essence of prescribed Old Testament worship was still an important part of free New Testament worship as the early Christians set up their worship to include psalms and prayers, baptismal rites and customs, scripture readings and commentary that would become what we know as sermons, the Lord’s Prayer, the words of institution for Holy Communion, and a growing body of hymns and spiritual songs which carried the message of the gospel, edifying both those who sang them and those who listened to them.

#8 - To emphasize the words and works of Christ in the context of the worship service, some of the main features of the Christian faith were put into song. For example, the first few centuries after Christ saw the song of the Christmas angels (Luke 2 - Glory Be to God on High) set to music and put to use in the church service. The Song of the Angels in Isaiah’s vision (Isaiah 6 - Holy, Holy, Holy) was coupled with the joyful cry of Psalm 118, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” as a way to prepare for communion. Sinners are brought into the holy presence of God through the sacrifice of Jesus who came in the name of the Lord. The focus on the atoning sacrifice of Christ was emphasized by setting John 1:29 to music (The Lamb of God) and singing it just before the sacrament.

#9 - Thus, over time, a worship service format was in use which highlighted “Christ for us.”

It included a regular observance of Holy Communion.

It included a standard set of statements or songs that reviewed the good news about Jesus. The Ordinary, as it was called, included the Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy), the Gloria in Excelsis (Glory Be to God on High; statements on the person and work of Christ), the Sanctus (the songs of Isaiah 6 and Psalm 118 as explained above), the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God, also explained above), and by about 1000 A.D. sung versions of the creed.

It included elements of the service that changed each week, known as the Proper – the gospel lessons which followed the life of Christ, other lessons which pointed to Christ from both the Old Testament and the New Testament letters, along with a growing group of hymns, psalms and prayers to complement the various readings. Both a standard lectionary and a church year calendar developed from this type of Christ-centered worship.

#10 - By talking about our worship as liturgical, we mean to say that we make use of an order of worship that is based on the historic Christian rite roughly summarized above, that we use a series of scripture readings that follow the Christian church year, and that we regularly celebrate Holy Communion. Liturgical worship is really all about the texts – scripture texts and song texts that Christians have used for centuries to keep the focus of worship squarely on Christ.

#11 - The next three slides examine one such worship service in detail:

- ◆ Hymn
- ◆ Invocation
- ◆ Confession of Sins
- ◆ Lord, Have Mercy
- ◆ Absolution
- ◆ Glory be to God on High

#12 -

- ◆ Salutation
- ◆ Prayer of the Day
- ◆ First Lesson
- ◆ Psalm of the Day
- ◆ Second Lesson
- ◆ Verse of the Day
- ◆ Gospel of the Day
- ◆ Nicene Creed
- ◆ Hymn of the Day
- ◆ Sermon
- ◆ Offertory
- ◆ Offering
- ◆ Prayer of the Church
- ◆ Lord’s Prayer

#13 -

- ◆ Preface
- ◆ Holy, Holy, Holy
- ◆ Words of Institution
- ◆ O Christ, Lamb of God
- ◆ Distribution
- ◆ Song of Simeon
- ◆ Thanksgiving
- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Blessing

#14 - As Martin Luther addressed the matter of worship in his day (16th Century), he sought to fill it with gospel content spoken by and for the worshipers. He followed four basic principles which we still observe in our worship today. Those four Lutheran worship principles are:

- ◆ Let the gospel predominate
- ◆ Let the people participate
- ◆ Honor the experience of the Church
- ◆ Employ God’s gifts of music/arts

#15 - The Christian Church Year

The Christian Church year is arranged on the basis of Christ’s life. Each year we review the life of Christ, following up in the non-festival half of the church year with the life of the Christian.

#16 - Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” The seasonal color for Advent is purple or violet, the color for repentance. With repentant hearts we prepare to celebrate our Savior’s birth and await his second advent.

#17 - Christmas is the celebration of Jesus’ birth. The seasonal color for Christmas is white, the color for the holiness of our Savior Jesus.

#18 - Epiphany means “manifestation” or “appearance.” The festival of the Epiphany centers in the visit of the Wise Men, sometimes called the Gentile Christmas. This season of the church year sets Jesus before us as the true Son of God. His glory is manifested by his preaching and his miracles and he is the Savior of all people. Epiphany accordingly has a mission emphasis.

#19 - Lent, from the old English word “lencten,” is that season of the church year where the days are lengthening – spring time. This was the time of year during which Jesus suffered and died. The color for the season is again purple or violet, symbolizing repentance. The season of Lent includes a review of Jesus’ suffering and death.

#20 - The Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. White is the color for the holiness of Christ and also the color for joy. Because Christ lives, we also shall live.

#21 - Pentecost is the festival which recalls the Father’s sending of the Holy Spirit. The color for the festival is red, the color for the cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit.

#22 - The festival of the Holy Trinity is the Sunday on which we emphasize the personality of our God, that he is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons in one God. White again symbolizes the holiness of God.

#23 - The Pentecost season covers the entire non-festival half of the Christian Church year. Green is the color for this season which emphasizes the Christian’s growth in faith.

#24 - The Lutheran Reformation of 1517 was a gracious act of God. The Lord used his servant Martin Luther to denounce false teachings and to bring the truths of scripture out of obscurity.

#25 - The season of End Times concludes the church year with three very focused Sundays: Last Judgment; Saints Triumphant; Christ the King. These Sundays remind Christians that Jesus is coming soon and that living each day in repentance and with faith in the Savior is the only way to stay prepared for his arrival.

#26 - Lord, teach us to pray.

Prayer is simply talking to God. It is a high privilege afforded us through faith in Christ. It is one way in which we acknowledge to God our dependence on him and bring him our praise and thanks. Thus, prayer is worship.

#27 - Why we pray

...and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me (Psalm 50:15).

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever (Psalm 107:1).

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matthew 7:7-8).

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing (Psalm 145:15-16).

We pray because God tells us to do so and because with our new heart we want to communicate our thanks to God, take him up on his invitation to bless us and express to him our dependence on him (glorify him).

#28 - Praying in Jesus’ name

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name (John 16:23).

Praying in Jesus’ name means praying with faith in Jesus as our only Savior. Literally speaking or thinking the phrase, “And this I pray in Jesus’ name,” is not necessary, but doing so can and does serve as a good reminder of why our prayers are accepted by God. We don’t come to God on the basis of who we are and what we’ve done; we come to him on the basis of who Jesus is and what he’s done for us.

Our sins separate us from God. By his life, death and resurrection, Jesus has made us acceptable to God.

#29 - Our prayers also, then, are acceptable to God because Jesus has opened for us the way to God.

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

#30 - To whom do we pray

Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:22).

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Matthew 4:10).

No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons (1 Corinthians 10:20).

We pray only to the triune God, for there is no other God. Prayers to gods other than the triune God are to no avail and in fact are acts of worship directed to the devil. Prayers to saints in heaven, to Mary or to angels go against God’s directive that worship be directed only to himself.

#31 - We may pray at any time and in any place. In Jesus’ day, people often prayed in public just to show off. For this reason Jesus encouraged private, personal prayer. Joint prayer is a natural element to include in a worship service. The Lord encourages us to bring everything to him in prayer – our sins (in confession), our concerns (great or small), our thanks, our praise, our own needs, the needs of others, prayers before or after meals, in the morning or at bedtime, prayers for the spread of the gospel, for protection, for the government, for our enemies, etc.

To bring “balanced prayers” to the Lord, some have used as a memory device the acronym ACTS:

A
C
T
S

#32 - God’s answers to our prayers

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).

Why, O LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me (Psalm 88:14)?

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.” Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us” (Matthew 15:22-23).

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me (2 Corinthians 12:8-9).

God answers every prayer a Christian offers, but not necessarily just as we would like. God often gives direct, obvious answers to our prayers. Yes, no, not yet, something different, something better – these are all God’s answers to prayers, for as our heavenly Father, he knows what we truly need. In prayer, we lift our hands to God. In his Word, God extends his hands downward to us.

#33 - The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

#34 -

THE ADDRESS

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true Father and that we are his true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father.

THE FIRST PETITION

Hallowed be your name.

What does this mean?

God’s name is certainly holy by itself, but we pray in this petition that we too may keep it holy.

How is God’s name kept holy?

God’s name is kept holy when his Word is taught in its truth and purity and we as children of God lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives contrary to God’s Word dishonors God’s name among us. Keep us from doing this, dear Father in heaven!

THE SECOND PETITION

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean?

God's kingdom certainly comes by itself even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.

How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and lead a godly life now on earth and forever in heaven.

THE THIRD PETITION

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

What does this mean?

God's good and gracious will certainly is done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when he breaks and defeats every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh, which try to prevent us from keeping God's name holy and letting his kingdom come. And God's will is done when he strengthens and keeps us firm in his word and in the faith as long as we live. This is his good and gracious will.

THE FOURTH PETITION

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God surely gives daily bread without our asking, even to all the wicked, but we pray in this petition that he would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What, then, is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that we need for our bodily welfare, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, land and cattle, money and goods, a godly spouse, godly children, godly workers, godly and faithful leaders, good government, good weather, peace and order, health, a good name, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

THE FIFTH PETITION

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins or because of them deny our prayers; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we ask, neither have we deserved them, but we ask that he would give them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment.

So we too will forgive from the heart and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

THE SIXTH PETITION

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?

God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

THE SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil.*What does this mean?*

In conclusion, we pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

THE DOXOLOGY

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*What does this mean?*

We can be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by him, for he himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Therefore we say, "Amen," "Yes, it shall be so."