

QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry
for the Christian community*

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WORSHIP

Worship is not synonymous with praise, as so often implied today (e.g., a “time of worship”, “worship group”, “worship leader”, etc). Nor can worship be confined to “worship services”. Our entire lives, service, and our meeting together, with praise, prayer, study of the Word, etc, are all part of worship.

The original idea of worship came from the world of slavery. The word was used to describe the duty owed by a slave to his master. The Hebrew word for worship is *shachah*, to bow down, and the Greek word for worship is *proskun*, to kiss the feet. Together these two words convey the idea of total obeisance – the offering of a life in obedient service. This is the heart of the idea behind worship. We see this thought coming into the relationship between God and His people in Deuteronomy 11 v 13. The development of the idea is seen in 1 Chronicles 29 v 20 and Psalm 95 v 6. So, in scriptural terms a simple definition of worship could be: “A life of obedient service, rendered in love”.

W E Vine (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words): “The worship of God is nowhere defined in Scripture. A consideration of the Greek verbs shows that it is not confined to praise. Broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement of God, His nature, attributes, ways, and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving, or by deeds done in such acknowledgement.” We can look at the subject of worship under two headings.

A. Personal worship

Romans 12 v 1 shows we are to be “living sacrifices”; therefore, true worship is total commitment, total obedience, and total availability. We “take up our cross and follow Jesus” (Matthew 16 v 24); we are “crucified with Christ” (Galatians 2 v 20). Psalm 40 v 6 – 8 reminds us of the willing servant, whose ear has been pierced (“opened” (AV) is misleading, rather “pierced, creating an opening”) as per Exodus 21 v 2 & 5 – 6, thus bearing the permanent mark of willing service, or worship. Jesus is the perfect marked servant; we take our cue from Him. Accordingly, any gifts of the Spirit we might receive, especially gifts that involve leadership or authority over others, are to equip us for humble service and not self-aggrandisement.

B. Collective worship

Part of our individual worship is to meet collectively from time to time, and this is the original idea behind the word “church”. Church is not buildings, traditions, or denominations but a gathering of God’s people as a collective aspect of our personal worship. We are “churching” when we meet collectively. The background of the word church is this: church (English) = ekklesia (Greek) = qahal (Hebrew) = assembly (English) (Deuteronomy 5 v 22). Therefore, the root idea behind the development of this word is God’s people assembled, or gathered, around His presence, literally in a circle with God in the middle (Matthew 18 v 20). The idea is demonstrated in a different manner in each era of worship, with the central presence of God being represented in different ways. We can identify seven different eras of collective gathering for worship:

1. Mount Sinai. Deuteronomy 5 v 22.
The first recorded collective gathering around God since the Fall. The people encircled the mountain of God.
2. The Tabernacle.
Placed in the middle of the camp of God's people with God's presence on the Ark in the Holy of Holies (see the picture below, any copyright unknown).
3. The Temple.
The House of God was considered the centre of national life, with the whole nation "going up" to Jerusalem.
4. Jesus in person.
Immanuel, God with us. He was always the centre of attention, even occupying the middle cross.
5. The Spirit and Word.
The Church era, which was foretold by Jesus in John 4 v 24 (spirit and truth). Thus, the anointed teaching of the Word is the principal means whereby God reveals Himself in this era. Prayer, praise, and Communion (the Lord's Table) do not represent God's presence; they constitute our response. This is why since the Reformation the non-conformist churches have done away with the altar, putting the pulpit in the centre, where the preaching of the Bible represents the presence of the living Word.
6. The Millennial Temple. Isaiah 2 v 2 – 3, Zechariah 14 v 9.
Jesus reigns over His Kingdom on earth from Jerusalem.
7. The New Jerusalem. Revelation 21 v 3 & 22 – 23.
God will be forever with His people, in the midst of them.

