

“Lord, We Come Before Thee Now”

Introduction. True worship, extended in the proper manner and spirit, will greatly edify us and intensify our hope. Worship that is not taken seriously is not only ineffective but also tends to worsen our spirituality. To feign worship is a serious matter (1 Corinthians 11:30).

When saints assemble, the Lord is with them. Therefore, whatever hinders His people from worshiping Him affects Him. The heart of the problem may be a lack of love or desire. Some are only present because someone has made them attend. Usually, any problem in worshiping God is caused by a lack of appreciation for the sanctity of worship.

Simply put, the attitude of many today is too casual. Some equate worship assemblies with attending school, going to work or even going to the doctor or dentist. Am I being too bold to suggest that worship should be the most significant event of our lives (Psalm 27:4; 138:2; cf. Acts 2:42-47)? If you stop and ask yourself why you are not as devoted as the early Christians, your heart will tell you that it is neither ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never intended it to be that way.

It is my hope that this lesson will help improve our attitudes toward our worship assemblies in order to get all to act properly and respectfully during them.

I. ***Areas We Must Watch***

A. How we act.

1. Many actions, such as talking, giggling, laughing, gazing about, punching each other, passing notes, sleeping, going needlessly to the restroom, clipping fingernails, making grocery lists, habitually running late, etc., are seen in assemblies today.
2. We must pay careful attention to the message, both during our worship assembly and during our Bible classes. The gospel message is the “word of life” that should be searched and meditated upon (Philippians 2:16; Isaiah 34:16).

B. How we dress.

1. First and foremost, we must dress modestly (1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-7). No one who respects the Lord and their bodies will parade around among brethren in revealing or tight outfits.
2. We must also dress in a way that shows respect for the Lord.
 - a) There has been a tendency toward casual dress which I fear (but I realize that it does not conclusively prove) betrays a casual attitude toward our worship and other areas of service to God.
 - b) I realize that we must be careful in this area. There are many matters that are opinion to many brethren, but are not neces-

sary to one's salvation. One must recognize the difference between faith and opinion.

(1) "The faith" is that body of teaching or doctrine which we must obey and follow in order to be saved (Acts 6:7; 13:8; 16:5; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:7; Jude 3).

(2) Opinion is an impression resting upon human judgment, without clear and satisfactory testimony. An opinion may be a very strong impression, but it is based upon a deduction or inference from a passage or passages of scripture.

c) Through the years, brethren have had varying opinions on men having facial hair and waiting on the Lord's table, men wearing coats and ties when waiting on the Lord's table, women wearing slacks in the assemblies, men wearing jeans or casual shirts, etc. However, if the clothing is modest and it shows respect by virtue of being the best we have, then we cannot argue the point.

C. How we speak.

1. We appreciate brethren who take the time to speak in a way that is thought-provoking, not cliché (Colossians 4:6).
2. We furthermore appreciate preachers and teachers who speak sound words befitting sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:6, 13, 16; 6:3; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10).

II. ***What A Casual Attitude Shows***

A. A lack of respect for the speaker.

1. The preacher or Bible class teacher deserves respect because of the word (Hebrews 12:25-26).
 - a) When people act improperly during preaching or in a Bible class, they have a disregard for both the messenger and the message.
 - b) How would you like to have the situation reversed (Matthew 7:12)?
2. Many young and old view the speaker with the same attitude as they would a secular teacher. They refuse the message by saying, "It's boring."
 - a) Do you actively work at holding your interest? The Bible is interesting on its own.
 - b) Although the preacher and teacher must do their part to be engaging, sermons and especially classes are two way streets.

B. A lack of respect for parents.

1. For the young people, your parents have often sacrificed to give you life, to care for you when you could not care for yourself, to clothe you, feed you and stand by you.

2. How do you think it makes them feel to learn that you are a disturbance in assemblies or in classes (Proverbs 15:5)?
- C. A lack of respect for other worshipers.
1. It is hard to teach and to listen when there are distractions and disruptions.
 2. Visitors may be watching your actions and judging the Lord's church.
- D. A lack of maturity.
1. Although young people like to think they are older than they are, when they misbehave, they are behaving like children.
 2. When adults misbehave, they show their carnality (1 Corinthians 3:1; Hebrews 5:11). Someone once said, "You're never too old to grow up."
- E. A lack of respect for God.
1. Worship assemblies are for the purpose of praising and honoring God (Psalm 44:8).
 2. However, the previously mentioned actions show a disrespect for God, and the behavior could cause you to lose your soul.

Conclusion. William Barclay quotes William Temple, the archbishop of Canterbury, as defining worship as "quickening the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with the truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God."

Worship is a blessed privilege that should be guarded with love, zeal and a realization of its worth and value (Psalm 29:2; 56:10). Our actions can either hinder us or others from realizing that worth and value or it can increase it.