

“Corporate Worship” / Equipped to Serve – Bride of Christ

“Voluntary” summer workouts. This was my summer during HS (4 yrs of BBall). Some of you know what these are. For those of you who don't, notice the air quotes I made around “voluntary”. They were never mandatory but they were expected. There was no coaching allowed – but they were very structured. We played games to 15 by 1s, we played a certain style of defense, and ran a certain free flowing offense that fit in with these fast paced pick up games. They were fun for those of us who loved basketball. For some they were tolerated and for others they showed up when if as they wanted. Why did Coach Owens do these “voluntary” summer workouts? We had about 70 guys in the program (9-12) and if you asked that group – one half could give you coaches answer and the other half all had different answers that were – wrong! Interesting fact: my 1st period during the school year was basketball. If you were on the team – this was your PE & it allowed you to get a practice in year round and then when bball officially started, you got 2 in. Here is why I told you that. When it was not BBall season, we did the same thing in 1st period as we did during the voluntary workouts. And almost half of the season, we did the same thing. Year round, we did the same workout we did all summer. Again if you asked the guys why - 1/2 didn't know coaches answer. What do you think was our coaches greater purpose in doing the same workout year round? **Go with me here & see the parallel: What is the point or purpose of corporate worship?** We do a lot of other things year round, but this, what we are doing right here - we do year round every week. And unlike my BBall team – I believe it is vital we all know why. So, what do you think: Why does God ask us to not forsake the gathering of believers corporately – Heb 10:24-25? Why does he spend a whole chapter here in I Cor as he is equipping us concerning spiritual gifts talking about the purpose of corporate worship? There are many things that happen in corporate worship & many affects on our lives for sure. But what would you say is God's greater purpose for corporate worship & how do we engage in it? We are going to ask God to answer this one question today -

What is God's greater purpose for corporate worship and how do we engage in it?

There are 3 related questions we will walk through to help us answer the main question. They are:

01. What does God say is His greater purpose for corporate worship?
02. What things deter God's greater purpose for corporate worship?
03. How do we engage in God's greater purpose for worship?

Another interesting fact – you may or may not find interesting: Coach Owens told the whole team at least 3xs a year why we did this structured but free style workout year round. 3xs! 1st day of school during 1st hr basketball, 1st day of official practice, & last meeting after our season ended. Yet, I kid not, at least half did not know why we gathered like we did year round. Yelling at us after a loss he said, “we didn't play Cardinal basketball – we practice it year round – what, did you forget?” To which Rondale my friend from the Virgin Islands who really liked basketball but really hated practiced replied – coach we practice year round. Most kids – didn't know why we gathered like we did. God wants us to know why we gather - and not just so we have knowledge or we are not ignorant. He wants us to know bc it is vital to who we are in Christ and how we are equipped to live in him and for him. 5:30

01. What does God say is His greater purpose for corporate worship?

Corporate worship at the end of the day should be about ... **worshipping God. Yes!** But what does that mean for us?

I Corinthians 14:26 (ESV) What then, brothers? When you come together, ...

***brothers, come together** – there is a sense that the greater purpose only happens together – with all engaged each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

***building up** – the act of bringing something closer to completion (7xs used – God's purposed is opened up. Here are 4

I Cor 14:2-5 (ESV) 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. *The last comes as God is giving specific instructions about worship. Point: worship is to build up.*

I Cor 14:33 (ESV) 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. *At the end of that instruction, God tells us.*

* **For God is not a God of confusion but peace.**

confusion – the absence of rules or a ruler (anarchy). Fruit of: chaos & anxiousness fill our heart, mind, and soul.

peace – Rather than confusion God is peace. Not just calm or lack of conflict. This is “shalom”. Shalom is complete harmony and perfect peace that allows us to know and have real and deep rest. This peace covers every area of life with God and others – and, it gives our heart, mind, and soul rest. God is not a way to this peace or shalom. He is shalom. In Christ Jesus through His finished work we can know peace – rest.

As we are built up in this deep rest in Christ – our affection and devotion will be built for Christ.

God's Greater Purpose for Corporate Worship: To help one another rest deeper in the finished work of Christ – to increase our affection and devotion to God.

affection and devotion – This is worship in every sense. What we believe is the greatest thing – what captures our affections will get our devotion – our time, our thoughts, our money, our conversation, our heart – everything. This is what God longs from you – and this is why he calls us to gather – to increase our aff & devo

finished work of Christ – What causes us to see Jesus as the greatest above all capturing our affection and devotion. His perfect servant life, his sin-bearing death in my place, and his rising from the dead to give me ...

rest – In Christ's finished work – we have shalom – peace with God and in our souls. We find that shalom in our souls with God can give us a peace in the world even when there is conflict. We get true rest in God – in the One who is perfect, complete peace – Shalom. *(peace that passes understanding – been there lately – want to be?)*

To help one another rest deeper in the finished work of Christ – 13

To increase our affection and devotion to God. This is why God says - come together and worship me!

By the way – our coaches purpose for His regular vol workout – was to make us a better team. We did the same thing bc this was the offense & defense we ran almost all the time so it became 2nd nature. To the guys who came and engaged – they and our team were better for it. But there were guys – who were more interested in the girls there and being seen. They hurt their own growth – and they did affect our team. They deterred the teams growth – bc they didn't get the point of why we gathered year round like we did.

02. What things deter God's greater purpose for corporate worship?

Summary In Corinth:

20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

They had a maturity problem – “Stop being babies.” This was not a child-like compliment. No, they were toddlers in their thinking & actions about corporate worship that was shown in their mishandling of the gift of tongues.

4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself,

17 For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.

23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?

The greater problem: *They were creating chaos and confusion in worship - not helping each other rest deeper in the finished work Christ.*

Briefly, we will look at 1) what and how the gift works and 2) how they were mishandling. I recorded a 15 min video with more teaching that will be up on our website attached to the sermon audio and notes by this afternoon.

Speaking in tongues:

Is a gift of the Spirit where prayer or praise is spoken in words not understood by the speaker. W. Grudem

1] Words of prayer or praise spoken to God – Tongues are words primarily directed toward God – proph at men

I Cor 14:2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

2) Tongues can be public and private –

I Cor 14:5 The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. God makes this clear - there can be a public purpose – but only with an interpreter.

I Cor 14:28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. Speak to himself means tongues can be private. This is what some (*Grudem as well*) call a prayer language.

3) Not ecstatic – but self-controlled – The New Eng Bib Trans. translates speaking in tongues in ch 14 as ecstatic speech. This is unfortunate. God says – this is not a gift out of your self-control.

I Cor 14:27-28 (ESV) 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

4) Not all speak in tongues – All gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and not all receive every gift.

I Cor 12:29-30 (ESV) 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? **Why this gift of tongues?**

Tongues remind us the redemptive work of God is a spiritual matter - beyond our mind or ability. (14:2)

In a world divided by language – tongues also show us one day there will be no division. 18

How and why did this church(es) mishandle this gift?

1) How? – They had many speaking in tongues at once with no interpreter.

* *This did not build up the body. (confusion and chaos)*

* *This distorted the name of God and his bride.*

1 Cor 14:23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?

2) Why? Immaturity in Christ – moves us to find peace/rest in what we do – not whose we are.

1 Cor 14:20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

They (Corinthians) saw tongues as a sign of maturity & their uncontrolled use as a thing that would please God.

If we are searching for peace / rest – Worship of God will be something we do to **earn or gain God's rest.**

How do we deter God's greater purpose for corporate worship – whether in a large or small setting? CGs & Crp

Wor - *If we had 17 people singing their own song / If we had 3 people preaching a sermon - similar but*

The issue is greater than tongues or a mishandling of a gift. *Like ...*

1) We often seek the experience of God to find rest – as opposed to the person of God – who is REST.

12 So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. Paul: seeking the works of God is good. But if it doesn't help one another rest in Christ and his work, we are probably **seeking to find rest in some experience or work for God – and not God himself.**

Ultimately This is giving your affection and devotion to something other than him.

This can be in the "camp or retreat experience", "worship experience", "life changing repentance experience".

All these may have allowed you to know Jesus' and his work in a way that caused you to really rest. But instead of resting in Him – we seek to rest in the experience. Jesus is shalom – not worship, retreats, or that moment.

2) How we participate and engage in corporate worship – can cause us to miss the greater purpose.

• **No Show** *Kids that never came to summer workouts – didn't help themselves, the team, and most left the team ultimately. This is in our covenant together (regularly attend) bc we know if we do not participate – we cannot build up – or help others or be helped to rest in Christ and increase our affection and devotion.*

• **Spectator** *We had some who only came to be seen or hang with the girls. If we participate, but only engage as a spectator – we miss building up and being built up together. We come to watch not engage. We come late not to be engaged. We don't pray, engage our minds, engage with others, sing, read the word, bring our bibles, write down questions – thoughts. (Spectators don't play – you get the point.)*

• **12th Man** *12th man are rabid fans, that cheer, make noise encourage the team – but they still don't play. Yes they are participating and engaging – but they still never play. We had great fans who at times came to the summer workouts because they were that intense. BUT they never played. Made it fun – made a lot of noise – but they never played.* Those who "12th man" types in worship are consumers who soak in the worship and preaching - post social media, leave hyped - but never engage with the body. They cheer on the leaders, the workers, and those – playing. But they never play in worship. They never serve, they don't engage people in large corp worship, and they never get involved in small corp worship (doing life in the smaller corp setting where even more engagement is possible for all). 28

04. **How do we engage in God's greater purpose for worship? How do we -**

Help one another rest deeper in the finished work of Christ - to increase our affection and devotion to God.

• **Follow God's Biblical Order** **Whether tongues, preaching, songs, prayer: passionate – but to build up.**

1 Cor 14:39-40 (ESV) 39 So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But all things should be done decently and in order.

• **Be an Engaged Teammate** *Everyone who came to summer workouts was a teammate who mattered. Some of the least talented guys had the greatest impacts on the whole team because of their devotion and their work ethic that made everyone better. We cheered like crazy when these kids scored in games. We started chants like Rudy to get certain kids in the game bc of what they meant to us. Coach rarely if ever cut these kids – because they helped the whole team.* As we engage in corp worship together, we are teammates that affect each other's affection & devotion to God & we help each other grow in resting deeply in Christ's work not ours.

1) **Ask God to help you worship from His REST – not to try and earn rest.**

At creation – there was shalom – perfect harmony, complete peace. Adam & Eve rested in God’s perfect peace. No worry, no striving. They worked the garden from God’s perfect rest in their soul, not to get rest.

In our sin and rebellion – shalom was wrecked. The sure sign we are broken and sinful people is that we look for peace and rest in any and everything but God – who is peace. **1) We feel like orphans** – so we look for peace in family. **2) We feel guilty** – so we work hard to remove the stains of guilt and shame hoping we will find peace – rest in our work. **3) We feel chaotic and anxious** – so we seek peace, rest in experiences, people, vacations, love. And, it never ends – our search for peace, rest.

Jesus came – His name “Prince of Peace” – Ruler of Shalom. He came not to give us peace – but to be our PEACE our REST. He did this by taking our place of rebellion, by **1) becoming the orphan** – we receive a family – a perfect family. **2) By becoming our guilt** – we receive His work – His perfect work. **3) By dying in chaos amidst criminals** – he took all confusion and gives us shalom – peace, rest in Him.

Have you trusted Christ with your guilt, your sin, - that causes you to search for peace for rest. He alone – by His work – can make you right before God (at peace with God) and give you His peace in His life. Trust Him now.

In Christ – believer – ask God to help you trust deeper in His work today so you can worship from REST – not for rest. When we are not at rest – when we think we have to work or perform for our rest – our worship becomes a performance or work. And even worse – like the Corinthians, we will pervert our worship for our own benefit and miss God – who is our rest. **Ask Him now to worship from His rest – His work – that is yours in Christ Jesus. Trust – I have no more work to do.** Shalom that was at creation can be yours today in Christ Jesus.

I have two last applications for you that I’m going to share and then we are going to practice or do together as we continue in worship. We built out this day to have plenty of time for this. Ready ...

- 2) **Engage in every aspect of worship – this builds others up.** (sing, listen, pray, write down, engage God in questions, - engage!) *Don’t be a spectator!*
- 3) **Engage others in worship – to build others up.** Pray together, talk together, sing together, rejoice together, weep together. Help others (as they help you) rest deeper in Christ’s work today and in so doing increase their affection and devotion to God and yours. (Every teammate matters! – We all are needed and we all need someone if we are to be built up. If we are **To help one another rest deeper in the finished work of Christ and increase our affection and devotion to God.** We need God’s Spirit and we need each other

We are going to continue in worship with a corporate prayer of confession. Let’s ask God to make this our – OUR prayer together. That we would join together in this prayer and ask God to help us rest in His work alone and increase our affection and devotion of Jesus.

Corporate Confession to God

Father, we confess -

We often seek to find REST – in the things of Jesus – but not Jesus.

And ...

We often seek to find REST – true and deep REST in anything and everything but Jesus.

Father, we confess

You alone are REST.

That in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we have been given true and deep REST.

REST from guilt - so we can REST in your joy.

REST from shame - so we can REST in your acceptance.

You o Lord are our REST – our Peace – our Shalom.

Blessing *(repeat after me)*

God is our peace – Rest in Him

Take some time to welcome one another in this rest. Begin your greeting with – He is our rest.