

Why We Do What We Do?

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Good morning! Welcome back to our second message entitled “Why We Do What We Do?” it was such a blessing to hear from Pastor Lester last week.

There are multitudes of things that maybe we started for a good reason but just became habits we no longer think about.

Organizations, relationships, and religion can all become meaningless pattern and habit, empty of emotion and real substance. We so easily stop asking “why”. What’s worse is that we can live in the space for a long time - never asking “why”, never connecting to the real life-giving purpose of a particular activity.

Asking “why” strips away assumptions, pretense and hype. It exposes the true nature of things.

Some of us were trained not to ask “why”. “Because I said so” is a notorious “why” killer. You don’t need to know “why”.

Benjamin Franklin once said,

“All highly competent people continually search for ways to keep learning, growing, and improving. They do that by asking WHY. After all, the person who knows HOW will always have a job, but the person who knows WHY will always be the boss.”

Benjamin Franklin

And so we continue our series from last week Pastor Lester shared four values of our church services that help to shape why we do some of the things we do.

- 1. We value God’s presence above performance, personality, or program.**
- 2. We value each person having a personal relationship with Jesus and a personal infilling of the Holy Spirit.**
- 3. We value reaching out to and connecting with the seeker in our Sunday services.**
- 4. We value doing life together as a faith community.**

The Apostle Paul gives this one line in the midst of 1 Corinthians that helps to bring clarity to how we should participate in church services.

1 Corinthians 14:26 “Everything must be done so that the church may be built up”.

This morning I'd like to cover why we do some of the things we do during worship. Some of us are very familiar with the terms praise and worship. We say, “come to our worship night” or “please stand for praise and worship”. But, what does that mean?

Praise

Express warm approval or admiration of.

Worship

The feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.

Both of these definitions incorporate the word expression or express. Praise and worship is a means by which we express our approval, admiration, reverence and adoration for God. It's by nature something that we do, it's an expression.

And, while we are talking about the music portion of our Sunday service right now, that is actually a very narrow piece of the conversation. You can certainly express your reverence and admiration for God in many ways that do not involve music: giving, service, etc.

I'd like to give you two big picture ideas of why we do what we do, and then for our third point, I'll touch on a few specific things we do.

1.) We value authenticity in worship

One of the primary markers of this current generation is a desire for authenticity. It is such a turn off when people are fake or performing.

Jesus has a famous conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well. He tells her...

John 4:23-24

²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

Jesus is teaching us that true worship will be a spiritual interaction or a spiritual exchange, not one that involved physical sacrifices, and that there is a truth aspect to our worship. Truth thy word is truth, centered on his word, centered on Jesus, we would say true things about him. Truth in us that we would be honest or authentic before him.

2 Chronicles 16:9

⁹For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

“Those whose Hearts are fully committed to him” speaks to the integrity of the believer, genuineness.

We could ask ourselves are we authentic people? Are you pretending to be something you're not before God? Are you pretending to be something you're not before the people of God? Is worship a chance for you to show off your vocal talent for the next few rows in front of you? Do you withhold your praise because of the fear of what people might think or say about you? Has worship lost it's WHY? Do we get all cleaned up, and say the right things, and go through the motions?

If you're struggling, then struggle. If you're rejoicing, rejoice. In the same way, it's not just about you. Romans 12¹⁵ "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

In everything we do let our worship be authentic before the lord and before each other.

2.) We value freedom in worship

We value freedom in worship; freedom to express your love and appreciation to God; your need for him. But this includes the freedom to shout along with the freedom to be silent. When we talk about freedom, sometimes we can get caught up in making sure all of the demonstrative expressions are excepted. But this freedom also includes less demonstrative expressions of worship

Because sometimes you can't help it.

If you have ever been thinking on or contemplating a truth about God, or maybe you are carrying a heavy burden, you can't sing or clap – you're surprised you made it through the doors. Maybe you're wrestling with God or carrying guilt or shame. Maybe you're in a season of healing or grieving a loss or depression.

Scripture leaves space for these kinds of expressions of worship.

Psalm 62

**¹ Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.**

**² Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.**

Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalm 37:7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;

Psalm 62:5 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will be silent;

Psalm 131:2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul,

We want you to know this is a place for you to come just as you are. We would only ask that you let the community come around you and support you. Let us pray for you. Don't suffer in silence because sometimes you can't help it.

I'll say this because it's important. The Holy Spirit can use Worship as a means to help you turn the corner from guilt, depression, heaviness but, we have to partner with the holy spirit. King Dave said...

Psalm 42:11

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.

We value freedom in worship because sometimes you can't help it on a more positive side.

Acts tells the story of a man being healed right before church

Acts 3:7-9

⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

We value freedom in worship

So, what are the bookends, how far is too hard? Look again at 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 14:26 "Everything must be done so that the church may be built up".

Love God, love your neighbor

This is also where God gives us discernment to know what is life-giving and appropriate in a community setting and which expressions of worship should be expressed in private or in a small group setting.

We also look to church leadership to help members of the church worship in ways that bless the entire community.

3.) We value biblically informed worship

Standing, clapping, lifting hands, shouting, singing in unison, singing and made up song, praying, kneeling, bowing, laying down, dancing, flags are all described in the scriptures.

Listen to these Psalms.

Psalm 47

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

- ¹ Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.**
- ² For the Lord Most High is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.**
- ³ He subdued nations under us,
peoples under our feet.**
- ⁴ He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.**
- ⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.**
- ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.**
- ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.**
- ⁸ God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.**
- ⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings^[a] of the earth belong to God;
he is greatly exalted.**

Psalm 150

- ¹ Praise the Lord.
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.**
- ² Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.**
- ³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,**
- ⁴ praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,**

**⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.**

**⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.**

Listen to all the different ways people worshiped throughout the scriptures.

One of the major conversations in charismatic circles is raising your hands during worship. If you look in from the outside, you might be wonder why we do this.

The lifting of hands in worship is not a strange or weird practice of the charismatic church. In fact, we lift our hands as a natural response at sporting events, concerts, and the like... How much more then should we lift our hands to honor, reverence, and adore our God?

The Bible gives several instructions to and examples of lifting hands in worship. Here are a few...

Psalm 134:2, "Lift up your hands to the sanctuary and bless the LORD.

Psalm 146:3, "I spread out my hands to You; My soul longs for You like a thirsty land. Selah"

Psalm 63:4, "I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands."

Closing Song