

LESSON 4

Unity in Worship and Mission

Acts 2:42–47; Colossians 3:16–17; John 20:21

Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Colossians 3:16

Class Overview: In this lesson, we examine how unity in the church is expressed through shared worship and shared mission. Scripture presents worship not as a private preference but as an act done together with others that shapes their identity and direction. Likewise, mission is not an optional program but the outward expression of a united body living for God's purposes. Drawing on Ephesians 4, Acts 2, and the teachings of Jesus, this lesson shows that when the church is unified in worship, it is naturally propelled into mission; when worship and mission are disconnected, unity weakens.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. **Explain** how worship shapes the unity and identity of the church.
2. **Recognize** worship as a shared, formative act rather than a personal preference.
3. **Understand** the connection between unity and God's mission in the world.
4. **Identify** ways mission strengthens unity among believers.
5. **Commit** to worship and mission as shared responsibilities of the body.

Introduction

MANY CHURCHES STRUGGLE NOT BECAUSE THEY LACK ACTIVITIES, but because they lack shared purpose. People may worship side by side while pursuing their faith individually. Others may talk about mission but feel disconnected from the life of the body. Scripture presents a different picture, one in which worship and mission are deeply connected and carried out in conjunction with others.

From the beginning, God's people were shaped by gathering before Him and then sent out to reflect Him. Unity grows when we not only believe the same truths but move together toward the same purpose. This lesson invites us to see worship and mission not as separate parts of church life, but as two expressions of a unified body living for the glory of God.

When Paul describes the church in Ephesians 4, he does not separate unity from purpose. The body grows as it is built up in love and directed toward Christ's work in the world. Worship draws God's people together, and how that shared life naturally leads them outward in mission.

Worship Forms and Expresses Unity (Acts 2:42–47; Colossians 3:16–17)

From the very beginning, worship was vital to the unity of the church. In Acts 2:42, Luke describes believers as being dedicated to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. These were not private spiritual acts done individually but shared practices that shaped the life of the early church. Worship brought believers together around the same truths, the same Lord, and the same hope.

As the early church worshiped together, unity was not merely declared; it was lived. They shared meals, prayers, resources, and lives. Their worship formed deep relationships and a shared identity. Luke tells us that they were together and held things in common, not because of obligation, but because their shared devotion to God reshaped how they related to one another. Worship aligned their hearts before it aligned their actions.

We also need to consider what is taught in Colossians 3:16–17. We are urged to *let the word of Christ dwell richly among (us), teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*. Worship is not something we do alone in God’s presence; it is something we do together for mutual edification. Singing, teaching, gratitude, and obedience all serve to strengthen unity when they are practiced corporately.

This understanding challenges modern tendencies to approach worship primarily through personal preference or individual experience. When worship becomes consumer-driven, focused on what I like, what moves me, or what meets my expectations, unity weakens. Scripture presents worship as God-centered and community-shaping. It draws attention away from the self and toward God and one another.

Worship also functions as a unifying recalibration. When we gather each week to praise God, confess truth, and give thanks together, our priorities are realigned. Pride is humbled, grievances are softened, and shared identity is reinforced. Worship reminds the church who God is and who we are together. In this way, worship both forms unity and expresses it. A unified church worships together with sincerity, and sincere worship deepens unity. When the body gathers before God with shared devotion, it becomes more closely knit, more Christ-centered, and better prepared to move together in His mission.

Unity is Strengthened by Shared Mission (Matthew 28:18–20; John 20:21; Acts 1:8)

Unity in the church was never meant to end with inward harmony. There is more. Much more. From the beginning, Jesus linked unity to mission. After His resurrection, He did not send His followers individually; He sent them together. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20 is addressed to every Christian, called to work together with a shared purpose under the authority of Christ. This shared mission has a powerful unifying effect. When we are focused on Christ’s work in the world, personal preferences and internal differences lose their controlling power. Mission redirects attention

outward. It replaces competition with cooperation and complaint with compassion. The church becomes less consumed with itself and more aligned with the work Christ has given it to do.

On the night before He died, Jesus reinforced this connection when He told His disciples, *As the Father has sent me, I also send you* (John 20:21). Just as He was sent with humility, obedience, and love, so the church is sent with the same attitude. Mission is our joint participation in the continuing work of Christ. When we understand that we are sent together, unity deepens around shared obedience.

Now, let's turn to Acts 1:8, where Jesus promises the Spirit's power so His followers can be witnesses. The Spirit is to empower us collectively for God's mission. Throughout Acts, unity and mission advance side by side. As the early church proclaimed Christ, served others, and endured hardship together, bonds were deepened, and identity was clarified. This is what enabled the church to thrive and grow under some of the most intense persecution imaginable.

Shared mission also reveals the fragility of a purely internal unity, which is often tense and fragile, focused on managing differences rather than promoting purpose. But when the church reaches outward, unity becomes active and resilient. Working together for the sake of others helps us develop patience, generosity, and a sense of mutual reliance. Unity, then, is not maintained by withdrawing from the world, but by actively engaging with it together in the name of Christ.

Worship and Mission Belong Together **(Romans 12:1–2; John 4:23–24; 1 Peter 2:9)**

Worship and mission were never intended to be separate parts of the Christian life. Instead, worship fuels mission, and mission gives worship direction. When the two are disconnected, unity suffers, either through hollow ritual or exhausting activism. When they remain joined, the church is both grounded and outward-focused. Think of what is said in Romans 12:1–2, where we are told *to present our bodies as living sacrifices*. Paul describes this as *true worship*. We need to remember that worship is not limited to what happens in an assembly;

it extends into daily obedience. Mission flows from transformed lives offered to God.

Jesus taught this in John 4:23–24. Acceptable worship is not confined to location or form; it is rooted in sincere devotion and faithfulness to God’s revealed will. Worship that is grounded in truth reshapes the heart, and a reshaped heart cannot remain disengaged from God’s purposes beyond the gathering. Remember, you are now part of *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation* with a clear purpose: *to proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light* (1 Peter 2:9). Worship and witness are inseparable. God forms a people for His glory so that His glory may be made known.

A unified church is one that worships together with sincere hearts and lives together on mission with a clear purpose. Worship *shapes* identity; mission *expresses* it. Together, they create an atmosphere that draws us closer to God and closer to one another, building up the body as it reflects Christ to the world.

For Application

Unity is not sustained by agreement alone, but **by shared devotion and shared direction**. When we gather to worship God together, our hearts and priorities are reshaped. Worship reminds us of who God is, who we are, and why we exist as His people. At the same time, **unity grows when we move outward together in mission**. Shared mission lifts our focus beyond internal differences and personal preferences. It aligns the body around Christ’s work in the world and calls on us to cooperate rather than compete. When the church remembers that it is sent together, unity becomes active and resilient.

We must examine how we approach both worship and mission.

Are we fully engaged when we gather, or are we simply present? Are we actively participating in God’s work beyond the assembly, or assuming mission belongs to someone else? Ultimately, **worship and mission belong together**. Worship fuels mission, and mission gives worship direction. A unified local church is one that gathers before God with sincere hearts and then goes into the world with faithful obedience—**together**.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

Memory Verse:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” — 1 Peter 2:9 (CSB)

Challenge:

This week, approach both worship and mission as shared responsibilities. Before gathering for worship, pray specifically for the congregation and for unity among God’s people. During the assembly, engage actively—sing, listen, encourage, and participate with awareness that you are worshiping as part of one body. Then, take one step outward in shared mission: invite someone to worship, speak a word about Christ naturally, support a work of service, or encourage another brother or sister to serve alongside you. Reflect on how worshiping and serving together strengthen unity in the body of Christ.

For Reflection

1. How does Scripture describe worship as a shared, formative practice rather than a personal or individual experience?

2. Why does a clear sense of shared mission tend to strengthen unity within the church?

3. What happens to a congregation when worship becomes preference-driven instead of God-centered?

4. Why is it difficult to sustain unity when worship and mission are separated from one another?

5. What is one practical way our congregation could grow in unity through worship or mission right now?
