

# Why & How Should We Prepare for Worship

John 4:24 - 1 Corinthians 14:40

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## INTRODUCTION:

### A. Lessons Texts:

1. **John 4:24** – “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
2. **1 Corinthians 14:40** – “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

### B. Two classic examples of Preparation . . . One from each Testament.

1. **Exodus 19:9-14** - And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.’ So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.

11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base.

Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.

13 Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.’

14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes.”

a. They realized that God was to meet with them. Verse 11

b. They sanctified themselves (set themselves apart) for that meeting. Verse 10

c. They prepared their garments beforehand. Verse 10

d. They realized that they were on sacred ground. Verse 12

2. In Luke 22:7-20, Jesus sent Peter and John to make ready the Passover.

a. People were selected to make the necessary preparations for the observing the Passover.

b. A specific site had to be arranged for the gathering. Verses 9-10

c. All things had to be ready for the arrival of those who would be gathering to observe the Passover.

d. The observance had to actually be conducted.

### C. Three Reasons for Worship:

1. **God commands it.**

2. **God deserves it . . . . .** God deserves our worship.

### 3. Men need to give it.

- D. I find it interesting that in all three dispensations of Bible history, people had to prepare themselves properly to come before God in worship.
1. The three dispensations of Bible history are:
    - a. Patriarchal Age – Lasted some 2511 years.
    - b. Mosaical or Jewish Age – Lasted some 1481 years
    - c. Christian Age – Since A.D. 30 until the end of time.
  2. God has always revealed how He wants to be approached and worshipped.
    - a. Frank Sinatra’s famous song lyric . . . “I did it my way.”
    - b. Too many people hold that attitude toward worship . . . Doing it their way.
- E. The New Testament sets forth five elements of acceptable worship.
1. Singing – Ephesians 5:19
  2. Praying – 1 Timothy 2
  3. Teach/Preach – Acts 20
  4. Lay by in store – Giving 1 Corinthians 16:2
  5. Lord’s Supper – 1 Corinthians 11
- F. **In worship we do the right things . . . But do we do the right things right?**
- G. Some have been heard to say . . . “I didn’t get much out of the service today.”
1. You were there to give worship and homage to Almighty God.
  2. Yes, you can benefit by learning . . . Being edified . . . Being encouraged . . . But you are there to give worship to God, not for God to reach down and zap you with whatever your expectations are. **God DESIRES our worship . . . God DESERVES our worship.**
- H. **PROPER PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP BEGINS LONG BEFORE YOU ARRIVE AT THE PLACE OF MEETING.**

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

- A. **Develop a proper attitude toward worship.**
1. Gathering for worship is not:
    - a. A family reunion
    - b. A fashion show
    - c. A talk-a-thon
    - d. A debating society
    - e. A sleeping couch
    - f. A social club
  2. Improper attitudes toward worship.
    - a. “Do I have to go?”
    - b. “Do I have to attend every worship service?”
    - c. “Can we leave early?”

- d. “Why does it last so long?”
- e. “Why can’t we do it differently?”
- f. “Why can’t worship be more contemporary?”

3. The proper attitude is that worship is a drawing near to God, therefore, holy ground because God is present. Exodus 3:5

**B. When coming to worship, bring lives as free from sin as possible.**

- 1. By repentance and through prayer, ask God to forgive you of your sins.
- 2. A clean heart will be better prepared to be a worshipful heart.

**C. Before coming to worship, eliminate personal differences among and between brethren.**

- 1. Jesus taught in **Matthew 5:23-24** – “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”
- 2. Always remember that you cannot be right with the Father if you are wrong with your brother.
- 3. **Psalm 133:1** – “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”
- 4. It is hard to endeavor to worship where there is animosity.  
**1 Corinthians 11:18** – “For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.”

**D. In preparing for worship, study and reflect on the Word of God.**

- 1. How can we be prepared to worship the God of the Word if the Word of God that reveals Him is not foremost in our hearts and minds?
- 2. Caring parents see to it that their children get their homework for school . . . But are they as conscientious about seeing to it that those same children get their Bible class lessons ready?
- 3. **2 Timothy 2:15** is still in the Bible . . . “Study to show thyself approved to God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

**E. In preparing for worship, encourage others.**

- 1. **Hebrews 10:24-25** – “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”
- 2. Preparing for worship can involve encouraging others.
- 3. Even the faithful need encouragement.
- 4. Help prepare others for worship.

**F. In preparing for worship, purpose and prepare your contribution.**

- 1. **1 Corinthians 16:2** – “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

2. **2 Corinthians 9:7** – “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”
3. Careful consideration needs to be given to the amount one gives as related to his total income . . . Not as related to what he has left over or as related to what other people give.

**G. In preparing for worship, prepare the physical properties where the worship will take place.**

1. Congregation wise:
  - a. The building.
  - b. Songbooks and Bibles.
  - c. Communion ware (trays & cups), unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine.
  - d. People assigned to lead in and conduct the parts of worship.
2. Individually speaking:
  - a. Selection and preparation of clothes.
  - b. Bible and Bible class materials together.
  - c. Transportation arranged.
  - d. Important . . . Important . . . Important . . . Prepare well enough so that you will not be rushed on Lord’s Day morning.
3. Attention to these things will help to prevent distraction from the purpose of assembly.

**H. In preparing for worship, prepare your body by getting a good night’s rest the night before.**

1. This importance of this cannot be emphasized too strongly.
2. Explain dissipation on Saturday night.
3. Personal example: It is rare . . . very rare that I will schedule anything for Saturday night.
  - a. My Sunday morning begins on Saturday night.
  - b. If it is church related I will accept but abbreviate my time there.

**CONCLUSION:**

- A. **John 4:24** – “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” True worship involves three things:
  1. A proper **object** . . . . . **GOD**
  2. A proper **attitude** . . . . . **SPIRIT**
  3. A proper **standard** . . . . . **TRUTH** . . . . . That Truth is God’s Word!
- B. Worship is an emotional experience and outpouring of the soul in devotion and thanksgiving to Almighty God.
- C. The prime preparation needed is an **OBEDIENT HEART.**
- D. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**