



FPC Officer Training



Worship in the Presbyterian Church



Dynamics of Christian Worship



Christian Worship

- ☞ Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honor, glory and power to the triune God.
- ☞ In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed.
- ☞ In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world.

- ☞ Scripture – the Word written, preaching – the Word proclaimed, and the Sacraments – the Word enacted and sealed, bear testimony to Jesus Christ, the living Word.
- ☞ Through Scripture, proclamation, and Sacraments, God in Christ is present by the Holy Spirit acting to transform, empower and sustain human lives.
- ☞ In Christian worship the people of God
 - 1) hear the Word proclaimed,
 - 2) receive the Word enacted in Sacrament,
 - 3) discover the Word in the world, and
 - 4) are sent to follow the Word into the world.

The Language of Worship

- ☞ God brings all things into being by the Word. God offers the Word of grace, and people respond to that divine initiative through the language of worship.

Worship Times

- ☞ Christians may worship at any time, for all time has been hallowed by God.... But God set aside one day in seven to be kept holy to the Lord.
- ☞ The Reformed tradition has emphasized the importance of the Lord's Day as the time for hearing the Word and celebrating the Sacraments in the expectation of encountering the risen Lord, and for responding in prayer and service.

Worship Space

- ☞ Christians may worship in any place, for the God who created time also created and ordered space.
- ☞ Because the identifying reality of Christian worship was neither the place nor the space but the presence of God, the early Christians could worship in the Temple, in synagogues, in homes, in catacombs, and in prisons. Yet the Church began to set aside special places for gathering in the presence of the risen Christ and responding in praise and service.
- ☞ To this day, when the Church gathers, it is not the particular place, but the presence of the risen Lord in the midst of the community which marks the reality of worship.

Worship Matter

- ☞ The early Church, following Jesus, took three primary material elements of life – water, bread and wine – to become the basic symbols of offering life to God as Jesus had offered His life.
- ☞ Being washed with the water of Baptism, Christians received new life in Christ and presented their bodies to be living sacrifices to God.
- ☞ Eating bread and drinking wine they received the sustaining presence of Christ, remembered God's covenant promise and pledged their obedience anew.
- ☞ The Reformed tradition understands Baptism and the Lord's Supper to be Sacraments, instituted by God and commended by Christ.

Elements of Christian Worship



1. Prayer

- ☞ Prayer is at the heart of worship.
- ☞ In prayer, through the Holy Spirit, people seek after and are found by the one true God who has been revealed in Jesus Christ. They listen and wait upon God, call God by name, remember God's gracious acts, and offer themselves to God.
- ☞ Prayer may be spoken, sung, offered in silence, or enacted.
- ☞ Prayer grows out of the center of a person's life in response to the Spirit.
- ☞ Prayer is shaped by the Word of God in Scripture and by the life of the community of faith.

2. Scripture Read and Proclaimed

- ☞ The church confesses the Scriptures to be the Word of God written, witnessing to God's self-revelation.
- ☞ Where that Word is read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ the Living Word is present by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the reading, hearing, preaching, and confessing of the Word are central to Christian worship.
- ☞ The session shall ensure that in public worship the Scripture is read and proclaimed regularly in the common language(s) of the particular church.

3. Baptism

- ✠ Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ. Jesus through his own baptism identified himself with sinners in order to fulfill all righteousness.
- ✠ In Baptism, we participate in Jesus' death and resurrection. In Baptism, we die to what separates us from God and are raised to newness of life in Christ.
- ✠ The water of Baptism symbolizes the waters of Creation, of the Flood, and of the Exodus from Egypt. Thus, the water of Baptism links us to the goodness of God's creation and to the grace of God's covenants with Noah and Israel.

- ☞ As circumcision was the sign and symbol of inclusion in God's grace and covenant with Israel, so Baptism is the sign and symbol of inclusion in God's grace and covenant with the Church. As an identifying mark, Baptism signifies
- the faithfulness of God,
 - the washing away of sin,
 - rebirth,
 - putting on the fresh garment of Christ,
 - being sealed by God's Spirit,
 - adoption into the covenant family of the Church,
 - resurrection and illumination in Christ.

- ☞ The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith.
- ☞ The Baptism of adults who enter the covenant upon their own profession of faith witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for fulfillment in a response of faithfulness.
- ☞ Baptism is received only once.
- ☞ As there is one body, there is one Baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes all Baptisms with water in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit administered by other Christian churches.

4. The Lord's Supper

- ☞ The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of eating and drinking in communion with the crucified and risen Lord. During his earthly ministry Jesus shared meals with his followers as a sign of community and acceptance and as an occasion for his own ministry.
- ☞ In his last meal before his death, Jesus took and shared with his disciples the bread and wine, speaking of them as his body and blood, signs of the new covenant. He commended breaking bread and sharing a cup to remember and proclaim his death.

- ☞ The Church in the New Testament devoted itself to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to prayers, and to the common meal. The New Testament describes the meal as a participation in Christ and with one another in the expectation of the Kingdom and as a foretaste of the messianic banquet.
- ☞ In the life of the worshiping congregation, Word and Sacrament have an integral relationship. Whenever the Lord's Supper is observed, it shall be preceded by the reading and the proclamation of the Word.
- ☞ The Lord's Supper is to be observed on the Lord's Day, in the regular place of worship, and in a manner suitable to the particular occasion and local congregation. It is to be celebrated regularly and frequently enough to be recognized as integral to the Service for the Lord's Day.

- ☞ It is also appropriate to observe the Lord's Supper on other occasions of special significance in the life of the Christian community, as long as the celebration of the Sacrament is open to the whole believing community.
- ☞ The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love.
- ☞ Baptized children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation to the Table and the meaning of their response are invited to receive the Lord's Supper, recognizing that their understanding of participation will vary according to their maturity.

5. Self-Offering

- ☞ The Christian life is an offering of one's self to God.
- ☞ In worship the people are presented with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ, are claimed and set free by him, and are led to respond by offering to him their lives, their particular gifts and abilities, and their material goods.

6. Relating to Each Other and the World

- ☞ Worship is an activity of the common life of the people of God in which the care of the members for each other and for the quality of their life and ministry together expresses the reality of God's power to create and sustain community in the midst of a sinful world.
- ☞ As God is concerned for the events in daily life, so members of the community in worship appropriately express concern for one another and for their ministry in the world.

