

# Explaining Worship



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# Worship

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## What is Worship?

Worship is when we direct our attention and our focus towards God. Christians believe that when they worship they become more aware of God's presence and more open to God's love. Thus worship is any activity that helps us to do this.

More importantly Christians recognise that worship is about transformation. That is, worship changes us as we encounter and are shaped, challenged and healed by God's love.

It therefore follows that worship, both as individuals and as a community is the single most important activity that Christians are involved in. Everything we do should flow from this encounter with God's love in worship.

## How do Christians Worship?

Most Christian worship involves the singing of songs, the saying of prayers and the observance of silence. The music, words and silence should shape the worshipper and enable them to open up to the presence of God.

Christians also read the Bible and listen to talks called sermons. Christians believe that the stories told in the Bible and explored in the sermon help them to respond to God.

At the centre of Christian worship is the celebration of Holy Communion. In this special service of prayers, the story of Jesus is told and the command of Jesus to share bread and wine in remembrance of what he did is observed. These prayers end with the sharing of bread

and wine as powerful symbols of the love that God has for each one of us.

In Methodist Churches all are welcome to come forward and receive the bread and wine, including and especially children.

## **The Pattern of Worship**

Most services of worship can be seen to have three phases.

The first phase is a period of Preparation in which the worshipper is invited to still their heart and mind, come into the presence of God and focus on God's love. Usually this phase includes songs and prayers of praise and confession. Confession is that act of profound honesty by which we declare that we are broken people in need of God's love.

The second phase is a period of reflection on the Bible. This includes Bible readings and a talk called a sermon. The worshipper is encouraged to explore the bible reading with all, of their senses, their intellect and their imagination. As they do so they ask God to guide and direct them.

The third phase of worship is a period of Response to the grace or love that the worshipper has encountered in worship. This takes the form of further songs and prayers especially prayers for the world and for other people. It may also take the form of some sort of symbolic action such as lighting a candle.

The Celebration of Holy Communion and the Service of Baptism usually takes place within this final section because these are our responses to God's love.

## **How do we Worship locally?**

Most of the worship in our local churches is in a traditional Methodist style. We do occasionally also offer Café style, Taizé and Messy Church and all age options. The leader of worship may be a minister or a local lay person. We have rich tradition of worship led by our faithful band of local accredited lay preachers.

Our churches use a variety of hymnbooks including Singing the Faith, Hymn & Psalms, Songs of Fellowship and Mission Praise and some project the words. You will be given the correct books/information as you arrive.

## **Money**

During the service a collection of money is taken. This is taken as a response to God's love. Please feel free to respond to this in whatever way you feel is right. Please do not feel obliged to give money though any gift you are willing to offer will be gratefully received. It is the duty of church members to fund the church appropriately not visitors or newcomers.

## **Children**

All children and babies, of whatever age, are welcome in worship at all times. Please don't be embarrassed by crying babies. You will not distract the minister or preacher and may provide a welcome distraction for the congregation! We would however ask that children are not allowed to run around. This is a matter of respect but also safety.

## **Questions**

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to ask one of the congregation, the welcome stewards or approach the minister.