

August 4, 2014

Over the last 40 years the intent of corporate worship to God has been restored to one similar to the worship exercised during King David's reign. The roots of this restoration can be traced to several sources; Afro American Christians, the Jesus People revival, the Charismatic movement and in Toronto Canada with a strong Jewish flavour, the "Catacombs" youth movement led by Merv and Merla Watson. This form of worship was birthed by Christians "baptised in the Holy Spirit" and they had both expectations and experiences of the Holy Spirit's gifts and ministry.

Today, most evangelical churches enjoy various expressions of this type worship but for those of us who were at its inception our focus is seeing it developed as the work of Christ and our relationship to God the Father as being the prime theme.

Some feel that the requirement to collectively worship in the usual standing position is not how they would like to express their devotion; their preference is to read scripture or just sit silently during the twenty to sixty minute time-frame but is this action a valid expression of corporate worship? The Psalms are replete with encouragements to shout, sing, dance, raise hands, and use every form of musical instrument to "magnify the Lord." We are not short of Biblical encouragement for this collective activity of worshipping God.

The issue lies in the choice between the "I" prefer and the "we" together. Even though the actions themselves are "spiritual" and appear *not* to conflict with the collective activity of worship, in reality sitting silently with head down and habitually reading scripture *does* contradict the community direction. For example, the "I" and the "we" become obvious if I decide to sing out loud during a time of teaching because I preferred it to collective listening. The impact, on the corporate however, is the same in terms of unity of action, unity of purpose and unity of focus on God.

Is there then room for expression of the gifts of the Spirit and/or scripture revelation? Well, yes; it's outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 as being LED BY THE SPIRIT. The point is, habitually doing something different than sharing in an activity requiring collective expression produces actions that are under the control of "self" not the "body." If my right hand consistently refuses to work when my body needs it (and has the ability to do so) then the solution of Jesus is rather severe; "cut it off" because it is in rebellion.

OBJECTIONS:

1. "Now," you may say, "I can't sing, never have and never will;" well, the Psalms encourage us to "Make a joyful noise (shout) (LB). If you can't carry a melody then speak the words out loud with those who sing.
2. "I don't think the words are scriptural and when I read the Bible I am reading the real word of God;" this appears to be very spiritual but if you cannot find any songs with which you agree with all the words then you have an even bigger problem. May God show you the root, because it could endanger your soul.
3. Using the same rationale; "I can justify not listening to the one speaking or teaching on the basis that they are not as "scriptural" as reading the Bible so I will read while they speak;" the "I" is not engaging collectively. There is no a gift of "being an arm chair critic to evaluate every word sung or spoken." We are members of a living body and that requires continual corporate involvement.
4. "I always worship in silence;" try that one on your spouse when he or she asks you a question or for some feedback. You cannot do this habitually in any arena of life other than a monastic order devoted to a vow of silence. You will find no support in scripture for "habitual silence" other than for punishment for failing to believe God's word through an Angel!
5. Now, for the less than spiritual excuses; "I must answer this text message;" "I need to carry on with this conversation;" "my hair needs the final touch up;" "I wonder if so and so is coming today;"

“There is a right time for everything... a time to be quiet and a time to speak.” Eccl. 3:7 (LB)

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him and bless his name.” Psalm 100:4 (KJV)

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Psalm 150:6 (KJV)

You are excluded from this command only if you do not have breath!!!

I RECOMMEND READING THIS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ARTICLE “CORPORATE MIND” TO SEE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF WORSHIP.

Shalom.

Ron Harris

