

“Worship by the Book — Communion with God”
Sermon Notes

What do we do and how do we do what we do when we gather on the Lord’s Day?

** Worship should not be profane, presumptuous and prideful, permissive, passive, vainly patterned, or pragmatic... but rather purposeful and principled:*

We gather for corporate worship *by the Book*

1. God **calls** us to worship (Ps 96; 99; 100)
2. **Benediction:** We receive God’s blessing (Num 6:22-27; 2 Cor 13:14)

➤ **When we gather for corporate worship by the Book, we commune with God**

** We commune with God in his household when...*

3. We pray (Mt 21:13; Is 56:7; Mt 6:5-13; Acts; Eph 6:16-20; Col 4:2; 1 Tim 2:1-8; 1 Cor 14:13-15)

4. We sing (Eph 5:19; Col 3:15-16; Psalms 99:4; 96; 98; Rev 5:9; 14:3)

Next Week: Various Texts “Worship by the Book —Proclaim the Word”

MEFC Study Guide

For the week of September 15th - 21st

The many questions below will help you to dig deeper, think more sharply, and consider application of the sermon to our corporate gatherings at Mound Free. If time is limited, feel free to pick and choose, as I've given headers to help in your selection.

Praying on Sundays

1. **Categories of prayer:** Charles Spurgeon once said: "What is prayer but a promise pleaded?" On May 12, 2021 Pastor Dave opened the summer sermon series on prayer, "calling on the name of the Lord" with these exhortations:

1. Pray the promise of God's pardon (1 John 1:9)
2. Pray the promise of God's presence (Hebrews 13:5)
3. Pray the promise of God's power (Isaiah 41:10)
4. Pray the promise of God's pleasure (Psalm 16:11)
5. Pray the promise of God's people (Matthew 16:20)

How do these categories of promise shape our corporate prayers? Do you see any areas that we as a church could better incorporate into our times of prayer?

Some find the ACTS acronym to be helpful for organizing prayer. ACTS stands for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. There are also prayers of lament, petition, intercession, deliverance and guidance. As a church, how are we doing at praying different types of prayers?

2. **Praying for others:** Paul tells the Ephesian church (Eph 6:16-20) to
"In all circumstances ..praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak."

And to the Colossians (Col 4:2-3) he says,

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us."

What might it look like for our church to better pray for "all the saints" when we gather? What ways could we pray for others, especially those ministering the gospel?

3. **Praying for civil leaders:** Paul wrote to Timothy, who was in Ephesus, about how the church functions, saying (1 Tim 2:1ff),
"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

If we were to pray more frequently for civil leaders on Sunday mornings, how might they change how you engage with your community? How might it help us in this tumultuous political season?

4. **Praying in public:** What are challenges or hurdles that some Christians experience when it comes to praying with other people? How might we encourage them to call on the name of the Lord with others?
5. **Temptations in prayer:** When we hear others pray, what types of temptations do we face? Let's be honest here! How can we take such thoughts captive to Christ? What do we need to call to mind to shape our affections in corporate prayer?

Singing on Sundays

6. **Addressing one another:** Paul tells the Ephesians to “*address one another*” in song. How does this surprise you? Mike Cosper notes about this,

“Many a young worship leader (or worship enthusiast) has commented, “We shouldn’t sing songs about God; we should only sing songs to God.” Similarly, some may say, “All these songs that talk about us—they’re man-centered, and worship should be God-centered. Let’s not sing about us. Let’s only sing to God.” This sounds pious and high-minded until you realize how many of the psalms are singing about and to Israel. Several New Testament passages thought to be early hymns of the church are the same way; they’re declarative and confessional, rather than directly addressing God.”
7. **Song genres:** Have you wondered what Paul meant by “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”? Consider the following references. Discuss whether these are mutually exclusive terms or overlapping types of song.
 - NT references to “psalms”:

Lk 20:42 For David himself says in the Book of Psalms,

Acts 13:33 ...as also it is written in the second Psalm...

Lk 24:44 “...everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms...”
 - OT Septuagint use of “hymns”:

*Ps 40:3 He put a new song in my mouth, a **song of praise** to our God.*

*Ps 65:1 **Praise** is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.*

*Ps 99:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts **with praise!** Give thanks to him; bless his name!*
 - NT uses of “song”:

*Rev 5:9 And they sang a new **song**, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”*

*Rev 14:2 The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, 3 and they were singing a new **song** before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that **song** except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.*

*Rev 15:3 And they sing **the song** of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”*

- OT uses of a “new song”:

*Ps 144:9 I will sing a **new song** to you, O God; upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you,*

*Ps 149:1 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a **new song**, his praise in the assembly of the godly!*

*Ps 96:1 Oh sing to the Lord a **new song**; sing to the Lord, all the earth! 2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. 3 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!*

*Ps 98:1 Oh sing to the Lord a **new song**, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. 2 The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. 3 He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

4 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! 5 Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! 6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!

*Ps 33:1 Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. 2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! 3 Sing to him a **new song**; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.*

*Ps 40:1 I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. 3 He put a **new song** in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.*

*Isaiah 42:10 10 Sing to the Lord a **new song**, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.*

- We sing because of God’s redemptive work. Try to name some songs and hymns that we sing at Mound Free to rejoice and give thanks for God’s work of salvation through Jesus Christ.

8. **Worship wars over musical “forms”**: Recall that *elements* are worship practices grounded in Scripture. They are the “what” we do in worship. *Forms* of worship are the “how” we do the elements. When it comes to singing and use of musical instruments, what are challenges, tensions, and conflicts in the various perspectives that Christians have experienced throughout church history? What have you witnessed at various churches you’ve been a part of — what has been good...and what has been not so good (according to Scripture! Not your own standard!)? At Mound Free, in what ways do we honor various perspectives on “forms”? How does worship in song and music take on different shapes and forms? What “traditions” have we, perhaps unknowingly, developed?
9. **Songs of Christ**: At Mound Free, how we do seek to let “the word of Christ dwell richly” when we sing?

10. **New Testament hymns:** In the New Testament, we *may* have some examples of the earliest Christian hymns, actually recorded in Scripture. Consider the following passages: 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20. What do you notice in these poetic and confessional passages?

1 Tim 3:16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

*He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.*

2 Timothy 2:11 The saying is trustworthy, for:

*If we have died with him, we will also live with him;
12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;
if we deny him, he also will deny us;
13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful—*

Php 2:5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

11. **Ancient hymns:** Check out the links to the following ancient Christian hymns. These are some of the oldest known hymns. Why do you think they've stood the test of time? What modern hymns from our time might stand the test of time?

1. Shepherd of Eager Youth (c. 200 AD), from Clement of Alexandria [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
2. O Splendor of God's Glory Bright (c. 390), Ambrose of Milan [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
3. Of the Father's Love Begotten (c. 410), Aurelius Prudentius [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
4. Phos Hilaron, c. 300 - 400 A.D. [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
5. Be Thou My Vision, c. 600 A.D., by Dallan Forgaill, Irish poet [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
6. O Come, O Come Emmanuel, c. 800 A.D. [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
7. All Glory Laud and Honor (818 AD), Theodulf of Orleans [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
8. All Creatures of Our God and King, (1200s) by St. Francis of Assisi [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
9. O Sacred Head Now Wounded (1200s) [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]
10. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (1528) [[lyrics](#)] [[set to music](#)]