

# Rediscovering Worship

## Structuring Corporate Worship

*“Let all things be done decently and in order.”*  
I Corinthians 14:40

### Corporate Worship

- Each individual believer is described as a “temple of the Holy Ghost” and can worship God independently – I Corinthians 6:19
- These individual believers are part of a church, and that gathering is also described as “a holy temple in the Lord” – Ephesians 2:21
  - “Know ye [plural] not that ye [plural] are the temple [singular] of God...” – I Corinthians 3:16
  - “...ye [plural] are the temple [singular] of the living God...” – II Corinthians 6:16
  - “Ye [plural] also, as lively stones [plural], are built up a spiritual house [singular], an holy priesthood [singular]...” – I Peter 2:5
- The corporate worship of a gathered church is:
  - internal (for the body of believers) - I Corinthians 14:23
    - Unbelievers are observers of a church’s worship and not participants.
  - deferential (to the edification of the group) – 1 Corinthians 14
  - relational (between us and God) – Ephesians 2:11-22
    - Our individual and corporate relationship with God should be strengthened.
  - formational – II Timothy 3:16
  - congregational – John 4:23-24
    - Every believer should be engaged in worship.
    - Sacerdotalism is a belief that the believers cannot worship for themselves and need a priest to be a mediators.

### Elements of Worship

- In the New Testament we find several elements of corporate worship:
  - Public reading of Scripture – I Timothy 4:13, Colossians 4:16, I Thessalonians 5:27
  - Preaching of sermons – I Timothy 4:13, II Timothy 4:2
  - Public prayers of confession, thanksgiving, and supplication – I Timothy 2:1, Colossians 4:2, Ephesians 6:18
  - Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs – Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16
  - Giving offerings – I Corinthians 16:2
  - Lord’s Supper – I Corinthians 11:20,23

- *Note – Similar lists include baptism, but I cannot find a clear connection in the New Testament linking baptism to a regularly occurring corporate worship service.*
- Each of these is an act of worship.
- While we can discern these individual elements, there is no structure given on how to organize them in a church service.
  - Therefore, we act in Christian liberty in the structure of a service as long as we remain in the bounds of Scriptural principle.