

LESSON 8 What the Church Does for God

In Lesson 6, we studied how Christians help each other in the body of Christ. In Lesson 7, we saw some of our responsibilities to unbelievers. The church must do service for itself and others. But the church's ultimate service is to God.

In Lesson 1, we learned that one of God's purposes for the church is to bring glory to himself. How can the church glorify its Lord? What does the church do to obey the Lord? These are some of the things we will look at in this lesson.

Christians who know how to pray should put their knowledge into action. Prayer is a service to God as well as a privilege for us. You know that you should worship and you like to worship, but sometimes you get too busy with other things.

If you are a Christian, you know the joy of obedience to Christ, and you feel guilty when you do not obey. Being obedient honors God. Let us honor Him!

The Plan

- A. Special Acts of Worship
- B. The Believer's Baptism
- C. The Lord's Supper

The Goals

1. Describe how we can worship God.
2. Explain why Christians should be baptized.
3. Discuss the biblical meaning of the Lord's Supper.

A. SPECIAL ACTS OF WORSHIP

Goal 1. Describe how we can worship God.

In our first lesson, we learned that one of the purposes of the church is to praise God. Christians bring glory to God by their godly lives. But Christians also glorify God by their worship. To worship means to pay respect, to honor, and to obey. We worship by praising God for His goodness. Paul greeted the church at Ephesus: "To the praise of his [God's] glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves" (Ephesians 1:6). (See also Ephesians 1:12, 14.)

All believers are to be like priests offering prayer and praise to God. Peter writes, "You . . . , are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). The sacrifice that the church gives is praise. "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Hebrews 13:15).

We also worship God by singing. The entire book of Psalms is a collection of songs. So like the writers of the psalms, let us "sing to the Lord, praise his name" (Psalm 96:2). Paul may have had this passage in mind when he wrote to the church at Colossae: "Sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16).

The Bible tells about another way to worship God: by giving. Yes, giving is an act of worship. In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul thanks them for their gift and said that the gifts were “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18). Because Christians give, needs are met and many more people are able to join in the praise of God.

Application

- 1 To worship means to
 - a) give money to worthy causes.
 - b) attend church regularly.
 - c) pay respect.
 - d) be kind to people.

- 2 The basic purpose of the church is to
 - a) bring glory to God.
 - b) help people lead good lives.
 - c) gather people for prayer.
 - d) sing about God.

- 3 Which of the following is NOT a way to worship God?
 - a) Singing God’s praise
 - b) Praising God’s goodness
 - c) Giving gifts for God’s work
 - d) Living an ungodly life



We must be careful here. True worship is not simply singing, praying, or giving. These are the outward signs of our worship. True worship is spiritual. We could go to a Christian meeting and sing, but never really worship. Jesus said, ““God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth”” (John 4:24). Worship is not form or ritual. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, “It is . . . we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). Let us never confuse the activities associated with worship with its spiritual reality.

Application

4 Choose the best answer of each two given in parentheses and write it in the blank.

a) True worship is
(spiritual) (ceremonial)

b) Christians must worship by means of
(the Holy Spirit) (forms and rituals)

B. THE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

Goal 2. Explain why Christians should be baptized.

When we express love to God, we please Him. Our love and praise are better than ceremonies. However, Jesus did tell us to observe two ceremonies—baptism and the Lord's Supper. We call these two ceremonies ordinances. Let us first discuss baptism.

When a person becomes a Christian, he or she wants to tell everyone. Baptism is a way of doing this. Usually the pastor arranges a place for the baptism, such as a lake, stream, or room in the church. The new Christian is lowered into the water and brought up again. This is a picture of what Christ has done for the believer. The Christian is, by means of baptism, identified with Christ's death and resurrection. Paul explained this to the church at Colossae:

In him [Christ] you were also circumcised, . . . having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:11–12)

So baptism is a sign to others that our old, sinful life is buried, and we now have a new life in Christ Jesus.

Baptism is not something done to unbelievers to make them believers. Baptism does not save a person from sin. It is not like magic. In the early church, people believed in Christ, and then they were baptized. When the Holy Spirit first came upon the

church, Peter preached the importance of faith in Christ, and “those who accepted his message were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

Later Philip brought the message of Christ to Samaria: “When they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

Jesus commanded us to baptize new believers. “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). It is our duty to obey Him.

Application

5 Read Romans 6:4 and fill in the following blanks:

By our baptism, then, we were with him and shared his so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might

6 Choose the best answer of each two given in parentheses and write it in the blank.

a) The church baptizes because (it is a ceremony) (Christ commanded it).

b) Who should be baptized? (Believers) (Unbelievers)

c) Baptism (makes people Christians) (shows what Christ did)



C. THE LORD’S SUPPER

Goal 3. Explain the biblical meaning of the Lord’s Supper.

Jesus also commanded us to observe the Lord’s Supper. At this last meal with His disciples, He said, “Do this in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24).

Like baptism, the Lord's Supper is an ordinance. It is not an empty ceremony. When we observe the Lord's Supper we honor Christ. When we share the bread and the cup, we show what Christ has done for us. Paul said that by it "you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). By this meal we show ourselves to be one with Christ. It helps us remember that Christ died for us.

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:19–20)

A person should not accept the bread and the cup until he or she has accepted Christ as Savior.

In this action, we are not only identified with Christ but with each other. It shows the unity of the body of Christ. Paul writes,

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. (1 Corinthians 10:16–17)

The Lord's Supper shows our faith in Christ's death, and in the unity of the church. But also, it shows our faith in Jesus' coming for His church.

Application

- 7** Which of the following is NOT part of the meaning of the Lord's Supper?
- a)** A picture of what Christ did for us
 - b)** An expression of faith in Christ's coming
 - c)** A way of getting forgiveness from God
 - d)** An expression of the unity of believers
- 8** The most important reason Christians observe the Lord's Supper and baptism is because these ordinances
- a)** bring blessings to the Christian.
 - b)** are religious ceremonies.
 - c)** were commanded by Christ.
 - d)** represent the Lord's death.

The church has a ministry to the Lord. It must obey and glorify the Lord. This work will not be finished until Jesus comes for His church. Until that day, the church is needed to show believers and unbelievers what is the will of God. The church witnesses to the lost and strengthens the believers.

The early church did all these things. My heart is moved each time that I read Acts 2:46–47

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Can that be said about the church in my area? Or of the church in your area? God wants to use us to help the church. He wants us to do our part.

Every Christian needs the church. “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another” (Hebrews 10:25). The church is so

important to Christ that He gave his life for it (Ephesians 5:25). So let us do our part in His church.

Now that we have come to the end of our study, I hope you have a better understanding of the church; its importance in bringing others to Christ; its value for you; its part in God's plan. Take time now to thank God for His church, the body of Christ. Let Him show you ways you can be more involved and be a part of His plan for the church.

Check Your Answers

- 8 c)** were commanded by Christ.
- 1 c)** pay respect.
- 7 c)** A way of getting forgiveness from God
- 2 a)** bring glory to God.
- 6 a)** Christ commanded it.
 - b)** Believers.
 - c)** shows what Christ did.
- 3 d)** Living an ungodly life
- 5** buried, death, live a new life.
- 4 a)** spiritual.
 - b)** the Holy Spirit.

CONGRATULATIONS

You have finished this course. We hope that it has been a great help to you! Remember to complete the second Unit Evaluation and return the answer sheet to your instructor.