



Chalmette Church of Christ

September 25th, 2016

A LITTLE LITURGY, PLEASE WORSHIP

Rusty Stark

What? Calling for a liturgy? This can't be right. When we think of liturgy, we think of rites and ceremonies. We think of word-for-word recitation of certain prayers and verses. We think of a leader saying something and the congregation responding in unison with prescribed words. But, this is not the kind of liturgy we're calling for.

Consider what the word "liturgy" means: Liturgy is the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to its particular traditions.

Much of modern religion runs from all that is liturgy, scorns all traditions, and mocks anything that is old-time and familiar. In many modern worship services, you have no idea what is coming next or what new idea someone is going to try to implement today. These groups promote themselves in their advertising with claims of non-traditional worship by saying: "We're Not Your Grandmother's Church." "We're a Church that Breaks the Mold." "Prepare to be Surprised." "A Different Way to do Church!"

All of this is part of a larger trend that panders to the modern dislike of "church." Since religious groups are trending downwards, it seems evident that people don't like "church." So, the popular response is to be as little like a "church" as possible. This leads to worship that is extreme in avoiding "liturgy."

This article calls for liturgy, but not the canned, wrote prayers and responses of Catholicism. The Bible does not authorize sprinkling holy water, waving incense, burning candles, etc. These things cannot be found in the New Testament.

However, God gave us five acts of worship. These acts of worship have been in use for 2,000 years. To do the same things over and over again makes those things customary and traditional. God's tradition, not man's tradition, is plainly called for in 2 Thessalonians 3:6. On God-ordained tradition, consider also Acts 16:4, Romans 16:17, Philippians 4:9, and 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

We do not respect and engage in these things because they are customary and traditional; we respect and engage in these five acts of worship because God authorized them and he expects them. We do not look to custom or traditions of men to determine what we will do in worship. The Bible demands we have authority for how we worship God. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17).

Just as we do not allow customs and traditions of men to determine our worship practices, we also do not throw away or modify the acts of worship authorized in the New Testament simply because they are customary and traditional.

Since the New Testament is approximately 2,000 years old, those who claim to have something new in worship are clearly admitting that their worship does not come from the New Testament.

Let's make some observations about the five acts of worship. First, there are only five acts of worship authorized in the church of Christ. They are outlined in 1 Corinthians beginning in the 2nd half of chapter 11.

- ◆ The Lord's supper was part of the public worship of the first century church (1 Cor. 11:17-29; Acts 20:7).
- ◆ Singing took place in the public worship (1 Cor. 14:26).
- ◆ Prayers were offered to God in the worship (1 Cor. 14:15-17).
- ◆ Teaching was part of the public worship of the church (1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 20:7).
- ◆ Giving was also done as an act of worship when they assembled together on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Speaking in tongues and prophesying are also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, but according to chapter 13 verses 8-13, the miraculous gifts were done away when the New Testament books were completed. Furthermore, even in the first century when these gifts were in practice in the worship assembly, they were only to be done for teaching purposes (see 1 Cor. 14:12,26).

It is not our right to add new acts of worship to those authorized in God's word. Instrumental music is not simply an aid to singing. In the Old Testament, it was clearly commanded as an act of praising God (Psa. 150; 2 Chron. 29:25). But it is conspicuously absent from the New Testament, and therefore cannot be added to the worship God has authorized.

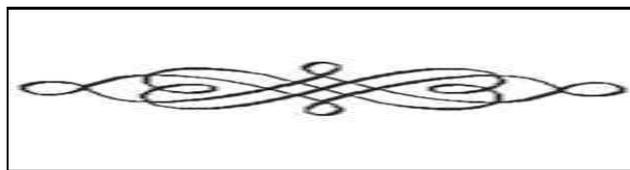
Each of the five acts of worship is independent. There is no authorization in Scripture to engage in more than one act of worship at the same time. We have no authority to combine them together. True, prayer is part of the Lord's supper and that pattern was set out by Jesus himself. But singing is not part of the Lord's supper, and actually interferes with the focus needed for both singing and for the Lord's supper. When we partake of the supper, we need to focus on the cross and the death of Jesus, discerning his body and his blood (1 Cor. 11:24-29). When we sing we need to focus on the words of the song with meaning and sincerity. It is not possible to combine these acts and do them correctly.

All five acts of worship make up the worship assembly on the first day of the week. We may assemble other times for other purposes: Bible classes, singing services, prayer services, etc. But when we assemble on the first day of the week in the general assembly of the whole congregation (see the words 'come together' in 1 Corinthians 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:23, 26), we need to engage in all the acts of worship that are under consideration here.

All of this adds up to a type of liturgy. We don't offer written prayers, and we may not always have the same number of songs or the same order for these five acts of worship. But these things are heaven's custom and tradition because they come from God's word. They represent his expectations, his revelation as to how we can approach him and praise him and 'give him the glory due unto his name' (Psa. 29:2).

News & Notes

- Please keep Tina Lance and her father Clifford Markum in your prayers at this time. He has suffered two heart attacks, pneumonia, and kidney failure this past week.
- Please remember Sherry Towle in your prayers at this time as she suffers daily with health problems.
- Please keep Crystal Russell's nephew in your prayers at this time. He was in a motorcycle accident this past week and underwent surgery. He is in critical condition at this time.
- Our fall Gospel Meeting will begin October 23-27th. Our guest speaker will be brother Allen Webster. Please make plans to attend each night and invite a friend.
- Please continue to keep Marilyn Chavanell in your prayers at. She recently suffered a stroke but is improving and now at home.
- Please keep Clyde Butler in your prayers at this time. He is suffering from cancer.
- **Update on Krisztian Montague. Krisztian is now at home and is undergoing treatments. He is still very sick and weak at this time. Please continue to keep this family in your prayers.



September Birthdays

25th-Nicklas Smith

October Birthdays

5th-Margo Rodney

6th- Jessica Lance

11th-Rita Williams

17th-Codey Babin

22nd-Kristen Clements

27th-James Kennedy

30th-Ray'Nieciya Hills

Prayer List



**Darrell Broking
Marilyn Chavanell
Diane & Lewis Dedman
Sherry Towle
Ella Gillard
Krisztian Montague
Addrean Jenkins
Joel James
Ryker Amaya
Carol & Julio Calix
Marie Pennington
Elizabeth Smith
Vickie Swanner
Amber Gaspard
Marlene Vasquez
Alice Riley
Ryder Howard
John & Bessy Hulsey**



***All of our brethren scattered across the United States & our troops in Iraq**

**Chalmette Church of Christ
200 De La Ronde
Chalmette, LA 70043
504-279-9438**

Services of The Church
Sunday

Bible Classes 9:00 am

AM Worship 10:00 am

PM Worship 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 pm

Elders

Mark Lance 504-250-8492

J. V. Russell 504-277-0251

Charles Whitley 504-277-4717

Butch Snyder 504-682-0051

Evangelist

Mark Lance 504-250-8492

gospelpr@cox.net

Deacons

Scott Russell 504-232-4120

Wayne Schulz 504-392-3999

Mike Swanner 504-271-2465

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