

Sunday Assembly and SPCTG, Worship 101

Avenues Toward God in the Sunday Assembly

I Corinthians 11:17-20

At times, we have been chided for the five “acts” of worship stance commonly held among churches of Christ (singing, praying, communing, teaching, and giving). Admittedly, the formula or pattern can become a meaningless, shallow cliché if the substance of the pattern is not understood. Abuse or misuse, however, does not invalidate the truth behind the pattern. Let’s have a look.

The Special Day

- There is a special day when Christians are supposed to congregate (I Cor. 11:17, 18, 20)
- This is the first day of the week, Sunday (I Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10)
- On this day, certain things are particularly appropriate. Some, as with the Lord’s Supper, suitable only on the Lord’s Day
- Or, as with the collection, a practical association only present on the Lord’s Day (I Cor. 16:1-2)

Singing

- There is an expression of singing clearly intended to be a reciprocal activity for the body of Christ (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
- The very best opportunity for the church to teach and admonish itself in song is on Sunday.
- Additionally, what better time would there usually be for collective praise to be offered to God?

Praying

- Again, what better time could there be for the church to be led in prayer than on the first day of the week by men lifting up holy hands (I Tim. 2:1-8)?
- The force of a local church family coming together on Jesus’ resurrection day to give thanks and make petitions is no small thing!

Communing

- The central activity for the Lord’s day is to meet around the Lord’s Table (cf. I Cor. 11:20 shows the serious problem when this is not the central purpose of the day)
- Central purpose does not, however, mean the most time-consuming aspect of the Sunday meeting (cf. Acts 20:7-12)

- It is altogether appropriate for the celebration of Jesus' death to be on the day of His resurrection
- More than any action we take in Sunday assembly, the Communion reminds us of the most important aspect of our salvation—the blood of Jesus (cf. Gal. 6:14)

Teaching/Preaching

- What better audience than the Lord's Day audience could there commonly be for teaching the whole council of God (cf. Matt. 28:20)?
- The "in season and out of season" aspect of preaching to brethren would be *most* in season on Sunday (II Tim. 4:1-2)
- What better time would there normally be to instruct the whole church than when the whole church comes together (I Cor. 11:17, 18, 20)?

Giving

- There is no more practical, serviceable time regularly available for the saints to give than on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2)
- This is not a time for private, secret giving (cf. Matt. 6:2-4), but an opportunity for the collective local congregation to declare their willingness to share God's bounty for the expenses of the church.
- The dollars recorded on the board are not all there is to congregational commitment, but neither are they insignificant

Yes, we do have five wonderful avenues of expression on the Lord's Day! Our worship centering on the Lord's Table brings together, as no other worship opportunity does, the fullness of our praise and devotion. Let people ridicule the "five avenue" pattern; it is nonetheless a pattern given by God and one full of rich substance.

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