

Theology of Worship

Christian Life Community Church

A Pentecostal Perspective

As a Pentecostal church we believe that as we worship God, we engage in not only on an intellectual level, but on a deeply spiritual level in which we can experience the presence of God through the Holy Spirit. We believe that the baptism and subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit are available for all who believe in Christ, have turned from sin and the world, and have surrendered their will to God (Acts 2:38-40; 8:12-17). As we approach God with an attitude of worship (in *spirit* and in truth - John 4:23), the Spirit works on many different levels.

The work of the Spirit in baptising and filling the believer:

Empowerment of the Spirit in witness and proclamation of God's word (Acts 1:8; 4:31)

Conviction of sin (John 16:8)

Leads into truth (John 16:14)

Sanctification by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:11, Rom 8:13)

Gifts of the Spirit are given and used (Acts 2:4ff; Rom 12), with prophecy, Spirit-inspired speech and deed, being at the forefront (Luke 1:67ff, 1 Cor 14:5)

Draws our hearts to seek Jesus in love, prayer and worship (Jn 4:23-24; 16:14)

Intercedes for us with groans that we don't understand (Rom 8:26,27)

We believe and expect that as a corporate worship gathering, we will experience the evidence of the Spirit's work within individuals in empowerment to witness and proclaim God's word, in conviction of sin, in the use of spiritual gifts, in more affection for the person of Jesus, and in holy living.

Why we do what we do at CLCC

At Christian Life Community Church we embrace certain expressions and practices in corporate worship that we have found to be Scripture-instructed and have become who we are as a church.

Worship band

The Psalms describe making God's praises glorious with the use of all sorts of musical instruments and songs. We endeavour to facilitate the praises of the congregation with a variety of instruments led by Spirit-filled worshippers. (Psalm 150)

Lifting hands

We encourage participation in the lifting of hands in prayerful surrender to God and in humble submission to his will. (1 Tim 2:8)

Hand clapping

Scripture also approves and commends the clapping of hands as an appropriate response to God. (Psalms 47:1) It is also simply an interactive and unifying dynamic that creates a sense of togetherness as participants share in the rhythm of the song.

Prayer for individuals

James 5:13-16 instructs believers to pray together in times of trouble, sickness, and in repentance of sin. This is a core function of the church in edifying and building each other up in faith. (Acts 2:42; 1 Thess 5:11)

Corporate spiritual gifts

We practice the use of corporate spiritual gifts as a congregation, and believe that they are for the building and edification of the church body today. Paul writes about orderly worship in 1 Cor 14:26-32. At CLCC certain members who have shown gifting and submission to church leadership are approved to speak corporately as they sense the Spirit leading them and as seems appropriate to the church leadership.

The call to respond

Lead worshippers at CLCC regularly call the people to respond to God in various ways (some listed above). We believe that worship is the proper response to the revelation of God through Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit prompts us. To participate in corporate worship is to respond to God for who he is, for what he has done, and is doing. As stated above, our theology of musical worship is one of engaging in an experiential response to him.

We do our best to facilitate this response with many types of songs: loud songs, quiet songs, songs of praise, songs of intimate devotion, songs of dedication, songs of repentance, songs of reflection and prayer. We try to keep a singular theme throughout the message, the worship time, etc. in order to communicate as effectively as possible.

Koinonia coffee break

We take a break during our main gathering in order for people to connect, grab a coffee, and meet new people. The translation of this Greek term is “fellowship”, a core value held by the New Testament church (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32) and for us at CLCC. This emphasis in our weekly gathering is a big part of our worship. We believe worship involves not only a vertical relationship between us and God, but a horizontal one between each other. To be a worshiper is to be concerned about the things that the God we are worshiping is concerned with – meeting the needs of those around us. Acceptance, inclusion, compassion, servanthood, understanding, and Christ-centered relationship are all elements of our interpersonal worship to God.

Praises in the Scriptures

All creation praises the God of heaven

Psalm 19 “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world.”

Romans 1:20 “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature.”

All heaven offers continuous praise to God

Rev 4:8 Day after day and night after night they keep on saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty – the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.” ... they lay their crowns before the throne and say, “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you please.”

It is fitting for men to praise Him

Psalm 33 Let the godly sing for joy to the Lord; it is fitting for the pure to praise him. Praise the Lord with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten-stringed harp. Sing a new song of praise to him, play skilfully on the harp, and sing with joy.

Psalm 147 Praise the Lord! How good to sing praises to our God! How delightful and how fitting!

With musical instruments and new songs

Psalm 96 Sing a new song to the Lord! Let the whole earth sing to the Lord! Sing to the Lord; praise his name. Each day proclaim the good news that he saves. Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! He is to be feared above all gods. The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the Lord made the heavens! Honor and majesty surround him; strength and beauty fill his sanctuary.

Psalm 150 Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heaven! Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequalled greatness! Praise him with a blast of the ram’s horn; praise him with the lyre and harp! Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him

with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals. Let everything that has breath sing praises to the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Col 3:16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

Eph 5:18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.

With the gathering of believers

Psalms 149 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing his praises in the assembly of the faithful. O Israel, rejoice in your Maker. O people of Jerusalem, exult in your King. Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp. For the Lord delights in his people; he crowns the humble with victory. Let the faithful rejoice that he honours them. Let them sing for joy as they lie on their beds. Let the praises of God be in their mouths.

God breathes songs of praise into his people

Psalms 40 I waited patiently for the Lord ... he has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. Oh, the joys of those who trust the Lord, who have no confidence in the proud or in those who worship idols.

As the proper response to his active love toward us

Psalms 30 I will exalt you Lord for you rescued me. You refused to let my enemies triumph over me. O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health ... Sing to the Lord, all you godly ones! Praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a lifetime but his favour lasts a lifetime!

Psalms 65 What mighty praise, O God, belongs to you in Zion ... though we are overwhelmed by our sins, you forgive them all.

Even and especially during times of hardship

Psalms 42 Day and night I have only tears for food, while my enemies continually taunt me saying, "Where is this God of yours?" My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be: I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving thanks ... Why am I

discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again – my Savior and my God!

Only made possible through Jesus

Hebrews 13:15 Let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to His name.

As witness to the world

Psalms 96:2 Sing to the Lord; praise his name. Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

Worship in the Scriptures

Judged by God as acceptable or unacceptable based on the heart

Gen 4 “The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift.”

Hebrews 12:28 “Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.” (Deut 4:24)

Strict instructions

Old Testament instructions on how the people were to worship a holy God were given in detail to Moses. These instructions had to do with dealing with their sin properly and reverently – through sacrifice. The sacrificed animal symbolically took the sinner’s place and paid the price of the sin. The animal represented one life given so that another one could be saved. The purpose of this practice was to show that God is high and holy, that he should be loved, obeyed and worshiped. These laws and sacrifices were intended to draw true affection and heartfelt devotion to Him by offering a way for men and women to approach God’s holiness, even in their sinful state. See Leviticus.

Worshiping gods other than Yahweh (idolatry) is unfaithfulness to God

Hosea 2:4 “I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. Their mother has been unfaithful ... she has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold – which they used for Baal.”

Judges 8:27 “Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.”

Worship devoid of justice and holy living is displeasing to God

Amos 5:23 “Away with your noisy hymns of praise! I will not listen to the music of your harps. Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living. “

Isaiah 58 “Even when you fast, you keep oppressing your workers ... you humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind ... do you really think this will please the Lord? No this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you ... feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness.”

True worship is defined by the heart of the worshiper, not time and place

John 4:21 “The time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem ... But the time is coming – indeed it’s here now – when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Worship is about the sacrifice and obedience of our will to God’s

Romans 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Those who overcome will keep their worship pure

Rev 20:4 “I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.”

Those who worship false gods will be judged

Rev 14:9 “If anyone worships the beast and his image ... he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath ... There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.’ This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”

