THE MANY JOYS OF WORSHIP

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In Psalms 122:1 David said. "*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*" We too should be grateful and glad to assemble with our loved ones to worship God. We should not look at worship as something we "have" to do. Our attitude should be that it is something we "get" to do!

In this article we wish to explore some of the many joys we experience when assembled together to worship the Lord. Though study of doctrine is also important, the focus of this article is attitude and counting the blessings available to us in worship.

Today, the house of God is not a beautiful tent or building. Rather we are the house of God and Jesus, as we read in Hebrews 3:6. "*But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*" And in Matthew 18:20 Jesus said that when we assemble together, He is there with us. "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" So the presence of God and Jesus is one joy available to us in worship.

Another great joy is fellowship with one another. Note the togetherness the apostle Paul described in multiple ways in Ephesians 2:19-22. "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*" Note we are "*fellowcitizens*", "of the household (or family) of God", "*fitly framed together*", "*builded together*" for a place for God to dwell.

We are always brothers and sisters, of the family of God, and have that fellowship in spirit if not in presence day by day. But assembled to worship we especially have that joy of fellowship. Hebrews 10:24-25. "*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*"

The presence of God and Jesus, and the fellowship with one another, permeates every aspect of our worship.

Prayer is approaching the throne of God to talk with Him through Jesus, Hebrews 4:16. "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" And it is part of our worship as well. One leads the prayer in a common language, so that all can pray together. 1 Corinthians 14:15 says. "*What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*"

That leads us to singing. When we praise God in song, we express our thankfulness to Him, Psalms 100:1-2. "*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*" While encouraged to sing often, we do so together in worship, as we read in Hebrews 2:12. "*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*" And we experience the presence of God as well as fellowship together when we praise Him, Psalms 22:3. "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*"

Sharing God's Word through preaching is part of our worship, as seen throughout 1 Corinthians 14 and in Acts 20:7. "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*" And when we take joy in the Word of God it helps us grow as Christians. Psalms 1:2-3 reads. "*But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*"

Remembering Jesus Christ's sacrifice in our communion service is a solemn expression of thanksgiving. It isn't a "rah rah" "aren't we having fun?" type of temporary pleasure. But it is fellowship together, 1 Corinthians 10:16. "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*" And in John 6:56-57 we read that we do have the presence of Jesus when we partake, and

that His presence builds us up. "*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*"

So while a solemn part of our worship, communion does have the same elements that build a deep, lasting joy within us; especially as we remember how much God and Jesus love us which in turn leads us to love one another even more. 1 John 4:9-11. "*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*"

And love for one another is so important. Every day and when assembled on the first day of the week, it builds us up. 1 John 3:14. "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*"

Most of the elements of worship are available to us constantly as Christians, as is the presence of God and the fellowship with and love for one another. But they are part of worship as well, and bring us great joy – making worship a wonderful thing we "get" to do!

In Christian love,
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