

News & Notes

Sunday, May 21, 2006

Remember in Prayer: Jonathan Albertson; Sandra Albertson; Michelle Bennett; Carrol Cherry; Vivkie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Marie Hall; Marilyn Hubbard; Carolyn Jordan; Christine Judge; Dot Ketchum; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Janet Rooker; Ruth Ross; Freddie Shaw; Lillie Mae Shelby; Caleb Smith; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Ruby Street; Calvin Ursery; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Ollie Ursery.

Pantry item for the month of May is paper goods.

Anyone interested in helping with **Vacation Bible School**, please see Sam Ford. The dates are June 4-7, 2006.

Our **hearts rejoice** with the baptisms of Tim and Crystal Madru. They were added to the body of Christ this past Monday.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Where is God when it Hurts?

PM: Church Discipline (Matthew 18:15-18)

For the Record (May 14, 2005):

Attendance: 78 Contribution: \$1285.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street



ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14)

Worship in Song

Jeremy Northrop

There are five avenues or acts through which one can worship God. They include prayer (Acts 2:42), song (Ephesians 5:19), communion (Acts 20:6-7), instruction (Acts 20:7), and contribution (1Corinthians 16:2). The focus of this article will be on singing praises to God.

When one is discussing worship, the goal needs to be worship that pleases God. The goal should not be what will please self, others, or anything else. Unfortunately, the church is in perilous times. It looks as though the church is on the verge of another split similar to the one of 1906. People, in general are expressing and showing discontent with worship. The emergence of community churches and new 'inter-denominational' groups as well as the depopularization of Christianity in general are just two of the signs that 'traditional church' is being rejected. The fundamental concern which needs to be considered is the fact that people are looking for something that will please self. Phrases are often said like, "I want to go to worship in a place where I can get something out of it" or "what does that church have to offer me?" These phrases are indicative of the almost if not outright selfish attitude so prevalent in the culture of the United States. The church should be influencing the culture and not the culture influencing the church.

Two principles need to be considered: First, one does not want to do any more than what is authorized (1Corinthians 4:6). Then, one does not want to do any less than what is authorized

(Colossians 3:17). If God is not glorified in worship, then there seems little point in attempting to worship at all.

Biblically, there are at least three reasons why one should sing praises to God. The first reason is that it praises God. Singing is an avenue by which man can worship. The writer of the book of Hebrews says, "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You" (Hebrews 2:12). Another reason the saints ought to sing is to edify one another. Colossians 3:16-17 says,

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

The songs the saints sing are to accomplish at least two things on this point: they should teach and admonish. Further, this text says that all songs should be sung by the authority of Christ. Thus, any song that is not in harmony with the will of God is not a song that should be sang in worship to God. It is not beneficial if it does not edify the saints.

Finally, songs conducted in worship should also be encouraging to those that are singing them. Paul said,

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:15-21).

God has not developed a plan of worship to Him that is going to be completely useless to the people utilizing that plan. If a person is going to make the claim that he or she did not get anything out of God-ordained worship, then the question needs to be considered: Did that same person try to put something into worship?

All worship, including singing, should be done with the right spirit and by God's authority. John well recorded, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). It should be done with all of a person's inner-being or heart and it should be done according to the truth of God. Further, Paul said, "What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding" (1Corinthians 14:15). Selfishness is condemned when Paul commanded, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3). The proper attitude one should have when worshipping is focused on God knowing that God had not forgotten about man and his needs.

One issue that commonly comes up when discussing singing praises to God is the use of mechanical instruments of music. People talk of how they enjoy them and are able to get more out of the music than if they were not there. However, when all is said and done, the issue is one of authority. Does the Bible authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music when singing songs of praise and worship to God? One can search and search the pages of his or her New Testament and such authority simply is not to be found. What is found is the use of the instrument of the heart and the 'fruit of the lips' (Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 13:15).

The common response to this argument is that the Bible does not say that one cannot use mechanical instruments. There is no doubt this is true. However, if the Bible told all that one cannot do, it would be such a large volume that one could not read it in his or her lifetime! Further, the silence of the Bible communicates a message. In this case, when the Bible says to sing, then all else is excluded. One will readily understand this when dealing with other situations in life but does not want to accept it when dealing with Bible. Interestingly, historical research indicates that several from the denominations were opposed to the use of mechanical instruments of music. The true church has continued this practice.

Singing songs of praise to God is a great blessing which all Christians can and should enjoy. However, it only a blessing when it is done scripturally and by the authority of God. All else is 'profane fire' (Leviticus 10:1).