

PHILOSOPHY OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

FAITH BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

In our corporate worship gatherings we aspire to be ***seriously joyful and joyfully serious***. God alone determines how he is to be worshiped. Therefore, we must look to the Scriptures to guide us in our corporate worship. As we gather each Lord's Day we incorporate into our worship the elements we see prescribed in the New Testament.

THE WORD READ & PREACHED - At Faith, we are committed to the reading and faithful preaching of the word. During our gathered worship you'll hear the word read many times. And when the word is preached, one of the pastors or other qualified men will read a portion of God's word and then expound upon it, seeking to clarify the meaning of the text and apply it to our lives today.

THE WORD PRAYED - Part of our offense against the spiritual forces that threaten our faith is prayer. We believe that God himself, in his word, has given us the substance of our prayers. During our gathered worship we devote time to prayer, during which we adore and praise God, give him thanks, confess our sins, intercede on behalf others, and petition him to meet our needs.

THE WORD SUNG - We love to sing at Faith and enjoy a mix of theologically rich songs both old and new, accompanied by a variety of instruments in our gathered worship. As we worship together, some people raise their hands and clap while others prefer a more reflective response. We welcome and value both of these as Biblical expressions in corporate worship.

THE WORD SEEN - The ordinances of baptism and The Lord's Supper (or Communion) are instituted by Christ and given to the church to be carried out corporately, symbolically reenacting the gospel message of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We partake in the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of each month and administer the ordinance of baptism as the need arises.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

God's Glory is Our Aim

Everything that the Christian does, including participation in corporate worship, is ultimately for God and his glory. The apostle Paul says, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31) Making much of God and his glory is what ultimately satisfies, encourages and stirs the heart of the believer to love God and others and do good works. All aspects of corporate worship must have God's glory as their ultimate goal.

Jesus is Our Savior, Lord, and Treasure

We confess with the apostle Peter that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). We also proclaim with the apostle Paul that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). God has highly exalted Jesus and given him the name that is above every name so that every knee will bow to him and confess him as Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). Corporate worship serves as a public confession of these truths about Jesus Christ. God is glorified when the value of knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord surpasses the value of anything else in life we might treasure. (Philippians 3:7).

The Holy Spirit is Our “Worship Leader”

The Holy Spirit is ultimately the one who “leads worship.” The kind of worshipers that God is seeking are those who worship in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). We depend on the Holy Spirit to make our worship “spiritual,” genuine, and rooted in truth.

The Gospel is Our Hope

The Gospel is the most glorious news ever proclaimed. The gospel reminds us of:

- God’s holy character and our desperate sinfulness
- God’s love and provision of grace through Jesus Christ
- Our gratitude and praise for what Christ has done for us
- God’s invitation to depend on him and receive his ongoing grace
- Our desire to be instructed and grow in the knowledge of God’s will
- Our mission to see the gospel spread to the ends of the earth

Transformation is Our Pursuit

God’s will is for us to be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3); that is, progressively transformed to be more like Christ. Stirring one another up to love and good works is to encourage one another to strive for holiness (Hebrews 12:14). We become like what we worship. Genuine worship of a Holy God will result in our transformation into greater holiness.

Everyone is Part of The “Worship Team”

Scripture commands us to be filled with the Spirit and address one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with our hearts to God (Ephesians 5:18-19). Therefore, our aim in the singing portion of our worship is vibrant, sincere, congregational worship in song.

Generational Continuity is Our Desired Legacy

God values generational continuity in the church. The gospel of Jesus Christ is celebrated in all its reconciling and unifying power when many generations in the church worship together. This is shown when young people show honor to those of older generations (Leviticus 19:32) and people of older generations do not look down on those who are young (1 Timothy 4:12).

Our Rootedness Balances Our Relevance

Our faith has a long and rich history. We can greatly benefit from the centuries of faithful worshipers who eloquently mingled clear doctrine with deep affection for Jesus Christ. Old songs remind us that there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9) and that the current generation did not invent the Christian faith. However, relying solely on the past can lead to sentimental, mechanical, or lifeless worship. God wants us to freshly engage our faith by singing new songs to him and by singing old songs from a new perspective and a fresh heart (Psalm 33:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:6, 149:1). When choosing repertoire, wise consideration of language and music styles that represent current cultural expression is balanced with historical continuity and biblical faithfulness.

Love Determines Our Style

Truth dictates the substance of our singing in worship. The doctrines of our faith are what we celebrate, use to encourage one another, and pass along to future generations. Love will determine the music style we use for worship in two ways. First, we acknowledge that it is loving to worship using music styles that are maximally edifying for the entire, cross-generational church. Second, love demands that we not seek our own, but surrender even our most deeply cherished preferences to build up others. Every believer in the church is asked to apply the gospel and “die to themselves” with respect to style preferences.