

# Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church

## On Worship

### **Worship is . . .**

Worship is our human response to God. In worship we acknowledge and declare God as worthy. We acknowledge God as alone worthy of worship. (Exodus 20:1-5) We respond to a Father who seeks worshipers who worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23, 24) True worship must be centered on God. (Psalm 95:6, 7)

A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture; the flock under His care.

Worship is a commitment of our total lives in recognition of God's saving mercy, embracing all of life as an act of worship. In worship, we present our bodies, our entire lives, to God as holy (set apart) and pleasing (acceptable) to Him. The mercies of God serve as the primary motivation for worship and provide the means for true spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1, 2)

Therefore, I urge you, 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. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Worship is the ultimate purpose of the assembled people of God, His church. Corporate worship is the gathered church celebrating the glory of God and ascribing to Him praise and honor, celebrating the finished work of Christ through His incarnation, sacrificial death and resurrection, empowered by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. (Psalm 96; 111:1; 122:1; 138:1, 2; Ephesians 5:19, 20; Colossians 3:16, 17; Hebrews 10:19-22; 12:28, 29)

I will sing your praise, O LORD, I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD,"

Let us not give up meeting together . . . but let us encourage one another.

## On the focus of corporate worship<sup>1</sup>

- **Worship must be God centered.** Worship is all about God and not about us. Christ is to be the object and subject. Worship is to be rooted in the Biblical revelation of God, proclaiming and enacting the victory of Christ over evil, ordering our relationship with God and our walk in the Spirit. We will show a high priority to the vertical focus of our Sunday morning service. (Psalm 29:2; 42:1, 2)

*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.*

- **Worship Includes Participation of the Entire Body.** Corporate and communal worship includes the participation of the congregation in which the entire body is in fellowship with one another. As true worshipers, we are called to express our worship to God through action. (Ephesians 5:18-19) (Hebrews 10:24-25)

*...be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart"*

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

- **Worship expects the powerful presence of God.** We do not just direct ourselves toward him. We believe that in worship God draws near to us in power, and makes Himself known and felt for our good and for the salvation of unbelievers in the midst. We earnestly seek His drawing near us according to the promise of James 4:8.

*Come near to God and He will come near to you.*

- **Worship includes both the head and the heart.** Worship must aim at kindling and carrying deep, strong, real emotions toward God. Worship must appeal to clear thinking about spiritual things based on shareable evidences outside ourselves. Worship does not manipulate people's emotions but anticipates the working of the Holy Spirit in our midst. In worship our relationship with God is re-established, maintained, repaired and transformed. The way we worship shapes the way we believe. Hence, worship is to be a continued rehearsal of our relationship with God, acknowledging God's presence in creation, in history, in Christ and in the gathered community. Worship shapes our view of the world, our values and our hope. In worship we encounter God; we engage in dialogue with God. Worship is experienced through hearing the Word and through expression of prayer and praise to God. (Matthew 15:1-9; Hebrews 12:28, 29)

*Let us be thankful . . . and worship God with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire.*

- **Worship must be Bible based and Bible saturated:** The content of our singing, praying, welcoming, preaching and poetry must always conform to the truth of Scripture. The content of God's Word is the ground of our appeal to authority in faith and practice and must be to be woven through all we do in worship. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12)

*The word of God is living and active. . . . It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

- **Worship results in transformation and response:** The worship experience must lead to challenge and to response, to a transformed life. The New Testament describes the gathered church by describing the actions and the lives of the members. Members are challenged to offer up the "spiritual

---

<sup>1</sup> Many of the statements in this document were adapted from the Desiring God Website and John Piper's work. © Desiring God. Website: [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org). Email: [mail@desiringGod.org](mailto:mail@desiringGod.org). Toll Free: 1.888.346.4700

sacrifice” that results in transformed lives seeking the “good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Isaiah 1:12-17, Micah 6:6-8, Romans 12:1,2)

*What does the LORD require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

### **On choices of style in worship**

**Our worship choices will be characterized by a graceful respect to others.** The 2000 year history of the church has confirmed many differing systems of worship as Biblically valid ways of encountering God in community. Notwithstanding differing worship preferences, our God-centered focus requires us to demonstrate a spirit of love and respect for each member of the congregation and worship team members as we engage in authentic worship. (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Corinthians 13)

**Our order of worship will demonstrate a careful balance and allocation of time.** The ordering of worship will include

- 1) approaching and responding to God in praise and prayer (including corporate prayer led by the pastor or worship leader, corporate sung prayer and personal silent prayer);
- 2) hearing from God in the reading and proclamation and teaching of the Word; and
- 3) a challenge for service—sacrifice—to God (including opportunities for service in giving, in participation in service during the time of worship and as continued service in transformed lives as we leave the sanctuary.) (Ephesians 5:19, 20; Colossians 3:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 14:15, 16; 1 Timothy 4:13.)

**Our music choices will consider songs spanning generations.** Music choices will firstly be considered based on theological accuracy. Playability and ease of congregational singing will also be considered so that participation will not be hindered. As our congregation is multi-generational, music spanning generations will be considered in congregational singing. Draw our music from an accurate understanding of the scriptures, spanning the current generations and historical time periods.

**Our worship will provide for intergenerational participation** - We will affirm young, middle and older musicians, singers and participants. We will include children and youth in our worship services to encourage all generations worshipping the Lord together.

### **On leading in worship**

**Undistracting Excellence:** In leading worship, we will sing, pray, play, preach and speak in such a way that nothing will impair a natural, undistracting excellence that will let the truth and beauty of God shine through. We will set an example of reverence and passion; we will exhibit wonder and joy. We will focus on providing an atmosphere (including: lighting, sound volume, sound mixing, musical tempo, musical style, etc.) for radically personal encounters with God’s truth. We will seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit. We will encourage creativity in these artistic areas, that Christ may be glorified by the talents of the artist. *“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:17)*