

*Lord, open now my heart to hear, And through Your Word
to me draw near; Preserve that Word in purity
That I Your child and heir may be.*

Johannes Olearius

Introduction

75. Do we need to *learn* how to worship? Explain your answer.

Growing through Worship

How do Christians learn to worship? For many, our education occurs simply through the Divine Services that we have attended. We learn about worship by worshiping with God's people. While there are different ways that Christians worship, many Christians have found it helpful to use scriptural verses and passages as the backbone of the Divine Service. God gives us His Word, and we respond to Him with His Word. **We are not obligated to worship in this way, but we may find a great blessing through such richly biblical forms.** In our study today, we will look up a number of passages from Holy Scripture. Hopefully, you will recognize these from your own use of them in the Divine Service.

76. Read Matthew 28:18–20. What part of our worship do we find here? What does this remind you about?

77. What words of worship reflect Matthew 15:22 and Mark 10:47?

78. The "Hymn of Praise" is another portion of the Divine Service. We sing many songs of praise at different times, but several texts find particular use in our worship. What do you hear in Luke 2:14? Whose words are these? Also look at Revelation 5:8–14. When do we sing these words? From whom do we get them?

79. Read John 6:68 and John 20:31. At what point in the service do we sing these words? Why are these words of St. Peter particularly appropriate at that time?

80. There are several texts that are used as offertory songs. Read Psalm 51:10–12. What do we ask God as we sing these words? How does this help us keep our offerings in proper perspective?

81. While these are common texts in worship, not all are in use in all congregations. One of the most universally used passages of Scripture is Matthew 6:9–13. Is it necessary that we use these verses in worship? Why are these words so common? What about the doxology ending?

82. As we prepare for Holy Communion, we know that we are about to enter the presence of Almighty God. Without His mercy we would not survive this encounter, but God does deal graciously with us. Read Isaiah 6:3–6 and Matthew 21:9. How are these words particularly appropriate in this context?

83. After the words of institution have been said, we sing the Agnus Dei, asking Christ, the Lamb of God, for His mercy and peace. Read John 1:29 and Colossians 1:20. How does this title apply to Jesus Christ?

84. Several different songs of thanksgiving are sung after we have received the Blessed Sacrament. One of the oldest is found in Luke 2:29–32. When were these words first said? How do these words reflect our response to communion?

From the Heart

85. We have looked at some of the biblical texts reflected in our worship. There are many more in the Divine Service and in other orders of worship. There are also many biblical quotations, references, and allusions in our hymns and songs. Think about those worship texts that you know. When you learned these words, you were learning Scripture. How is this knowledge of Scripture an advantage for our Christian lives? (See Colossians 3:16.)

86. The liturgical texts that we have looked at are all part of “the ordinary.” These are words that are repeated week after week in the Divine Service. Does this mean that worship will always be the same? How can we avoid falling into thoughtless repetition of words?

87. It is fairly common for Lutherans to describe these elements as “Lutheran worship.” We have now seen that the texts are biblical texts. Have you ever seen or heard of these texts being used in non-Lutheran circles? What does this demonstrate about the Christian church?

Digging Deeper

88. We’ve looked at a number of worship texts and the scriptural references behind them, but we’ve only scratched the surface. Many other liturgical elements as well as many hymns and songs also reflect biblical texts. Discuss other references and allusions you discover.

89. The book of Revelation contains a number of references to worship in the life to come. Read some of these glorious descriptions in Revelation 4, 5, 7:9–17; and 19:4–10. What encouragement do they offer you?

There are a number of books on worship that you might find helpful in your continuing study. Consider one of the following, or ask your pastor for other suggestions:

- 1) Timothy Maschke, *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Lutheran Worship*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003.
- 2) James Leonard Brauer, *Meaningful Worship: A Guide to the Lutheran Service*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994.
- 3) Fred L. Precht, ed. *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993.
- 4) *An Explanation of the Common Service* Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1908. Free PDF online (in the public domain).

Comparisons

Use of the Lord's Prayer as a Model: Anabaptists, Baptists, and some Wesleyans emphasize that Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer as a model and not as a form of prayer for repetition. They encourage spontaneous prayers from the heart rather than repeated prayers.

Formal Use of the Lord's Prayer: Most other Christians pray the Lord's Prayer daily or frequently in public worship. The official catechisms of the Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic churches contain commentaries on the Lord's Prayer. Repetition is only a problem if people repeat the words without considering what they say. Jesus Himself repeated prayers (Matthew 26:44).

Prayer with Non-Christians: Today, some Christians hold public prayer services with people of other religions. Interreligious services are most popular among Christians who have questioned traditional beliefs about the triune nature of God and do not consider joint services with non-Christians a threat to the Gospel. (In 1964 the Papal decree *Lumen Gentium* taught that Christians, Jews, and Muslims all pray to the same Creator.)

Point to Remember

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory. Isaiah 6:3