



**Title: Reasons We Congregate**  
**Theme: Reasons for Congregational Worship Services**  
**Series: Girding up the Local Church**

*Our key text today is written by King David (The Treasury of David; The Pulpit Commentary; Matthew Henry Commentary) and is part of a song that was to be sung as the people of God were going to Jerusalem to enjoy the holy feast. David is reflecting on the many times that he had heard the call to go to the house of the Lord. The language we are about to read expresses the happiness that is found in the heart of the child of God who loves the Lord. This child of God loves to be with other Christians for the purpose of publicly worshiping God in Christ's name under the influence of the Holy Spirit.*

Listen as I read Psalm 122:1, "I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'" We are told that this verse can be translated as, "I rejoice whenever they say to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" (The Expositors Bible Commentary) Pray!

David expresses joy that is in the heart of the child of God who is offered a personal invitation to go to the house of public worship. This announcement meets the desire of the heart that is in the child of God who is in love with Christ and the invitation is to be responded to cheerfully and joyfully.

*I would propose to you that even though Christians are the temple of God in this dispensation, they are still to congregate in public worship for the purpose of enjoying fellowship in the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Ghost has given many different gifts to the Body of Christ for the purpose of meeting the common good for all. (1 Corinthians 12:7) Each Christian has different gifts. One way of enjoying all that the Lord has for His children is to congregate and exercise those gifts as a corporate Body of Christ. Corporate worship takes many forms such as congregational services, Bible studies, fellowship dinners, group preparation for ministry, and prayer meetings. These are just a few of the ways the Lord has made for us to enjoy service to Him and to one another.

The Holy Spirit moved the writer of Hebrews 10:25 to write, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing," because when one or more Christians choose to do their own thing and not fulfill their part of corporate worship the Body of Christ becomes anemic in the ability to publicly proclaim all the works of Christ on this earth. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

It is the will of God that we should worship in public ordinances that are in line with the Word of God. It should be our desire to stir up one another to go and worship the Lord in public worship. The New Testament writer of the Book of Hebrews reminds us of our need to quicken and sharpen one another to do what is good and right.

However, we as Christians must offer some Biblical explanation for what can be enjoyed in public worship services, whether it being a Sunday morning worship service, Bible study, fellowship meeting or in prayer ministry.

*Just what can Christians enjoy as they sacrifice time and energy to offer heartfelt praise to God and Christ in corporate worship services?*

### **Christians are not their own**

*The first step to enjoying public worship services is to understand that Christians are not their own. They were purchased at the highest price that could be paid. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price."*

Everyone who has received Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord plays a key role in worship to God in Christ's Name. Christians who enjoy all the benefits of congregational worship have the heart of the Apostle Paul who wrote, "...a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God." (Romans 1:1)

"Servant" (doulos) here means "a bond-servant" or "slave," one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to the one who paid the highest price possible to set someone free. The practical application is the person who accepts the purchase price paid for him sets his will to the will of Jesus Christ. Jesus teaches that a faithful servant does the master's will. (Matthew 24:45-46) Jesus is God in the flesh and He sets the example by making '...Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...'" (Philippians 2:7)

Jesus lived the life of a bond-slave, one completely surrendered to the will of His Father. At least three times the Apostle Paul describes himself as a bond-slave. (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1) The authors of James, 2 Peter and Jude also described themselves as bond-slaves. According to 1 Peter 2:16, 1 Corinthians 7:22 and Ephesians 6:6 Christians are to consider themselves as bond-slaves of God and Christ. According to the New Testament bond-slaves are the true followers and worshipers of God. (Revelation 15:3; 7:3; 19:5)

In what condition does the Holy Spirit find your spiritual heart? Is yours the attitude of bond-servant or that of coming to the worship service with the attitude that the Lord is a bell-boy? Jesus says, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...” (Matthew 6:24)

## **Joy of greeting**

*Bond-servants get the most out of congregational meeting because they have chosen to live a life surrendered to the will of Christ.* Christians who get the most out of congregational worship have learned the joy of greeting their brothers and sisters in Christ. At least four times in the New Testament Christians are told to “Greet one another.” (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14)

Corporate worship opens the door of opportunity for Christians to find true satisfaction, joy, and fellowship walking in step with the Holy Spirit as they make time to “Greet One Another.”

Just like choosing to be a bond-servant of the Lord all Christians can participate in congregational greeting.

Peggy Noon, speech writer for Ronald Reagan, relates a story about Frances Green, an eighty-three-year old woman who lived by herself on Social Security in a town just outside of San Francisco, California. Peggy was very poor, but for eight years she had been sending one dollar a year to the Republic National Convention. One day Frances got an RNC fund raising letter inviting the recipient to come to the White house to meet President Ronald Reagan. She never noticed the little RSVP card that suggested a positive reply that needed to be accompanied by a generous donation. She thought she had been invited because they appreciated her dollar-a-year support.

Frances scraped up every extra cent she had and took a four day train ride across America. Unable to afford a sleeper, she slept sitting up in the coach. Finally, this little elderly woman with white hair, white stockings, an old hat with white netting and an all white dress arrived at the White House.

When she walked up to the entrance of where the grand event was to be held she gave her name to the guard. He informed Frances that her name was not on the list. She could not go in.

A Ford Motor company executive who was standing in line behind Frances watched and listened to the little scenario. Realizing something was wrong, he pulled Frances aside and got her story. He asked her to return the next day at 9:00 A.M.. Frances agreed. This executive of Ford Motor Company made contact with Anne Higgins, a presidential aide, and got clearance to give Frances a tour of the White House and if possible introduce her to the president.

The next day was anything but calm and easy at the White House. Ed Meese had just resigned and there had been a military uprising abroad. President Reagan was in and out of high-level secret sessions.

Never-the-less, Frances Green showed up right on time with full expectation and enthusiasm. An executive met her and gave her a personal tour of the White House, then quietly led her to the Oval Office. Members of the National Security Council came in and out while high-ranking generals were coming and going.

President Ronald Reagan glanced out of his office and saw Frances, patiently waiting. With a smile President Ronald Reagan motioned for her to come into the office. As Frances entered, President Reagan rose from his desk, invited her to sit down. They talked about her town and family and California. The president of the United States and the White House staff took time out of a very busy day to properly greet Frances Green.

The Apostle Paul proclaims a powerful truth about his work with the Lord that the Body of Christ should take note of. In 2 Corinthians 5:20 he says, “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf...”

All Christians are “Commissioned” to the work of the gospel of Christ in some way. They are to make disciples by “teaching [others] to obey everything [the Lord has] commanded [them to do]. William Barclay writes, “Here is the Christian's proud privilege and almost terrifying responsibility. The honor of Christ and His church are in the hands of Christians. By their every word and action they make mankind think more or less of the Body of Christ and of Jesus.”

Congregational worship is a wonderful opportunity to greet each other on behalf of Christ, thus letting Jesus live through us as people congregate for whatever reason in the Lord's name.

Considering the truth of being Christ's ambassador, Christians say “I rejoice in the opportunity to fulfill God's Word in regard to greeting one another.” Every church that walks in obedience to the Written Word makes time for greeting one another and Christian fellowship.

### **Publicly sing the praises of God**

*Congregational worship opens a door of opportunity for Christians to greet one another and corporate worship offers Christians the opportunity to publicly sing the praises of God. Colossians 3:16 says, 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.” (Colossians 3:16)*

Ephesians 5:19 says, “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,..” (Ephesians 5:19) Barnes Notes tells us Ephesians 5:19 is a passage of Scripture that has the force of a command. It is a matter of obligation on Christians to have corporate singing. Jesus sets the example and the importance in singing at the Lord’s supper. (Matthew 26:30)

The next order of business for corporate worship after greeting each other is communicating and proclaiming through Christian songs. Congregational singing is acceptable and pleasing to God and it is a wonderful opportunity to publicly proclaim all the works of the Lord. Congregational singing provides the way for us as a Body of Christ to take control of our minds and begin to meditate upon the Lord.

Steve Camp, in his written reformation to the contemporary Christian music industry wrote; “Music is a powerful tool from the Lord Jesus to His church intended for worship, praise, encouragement, edification, evangelism, teaching, admonishing and exhorting God’s people to holiness. Its chief aim is always to glorify God and worship Him.”

The Word of God tells us some powerful truths concerning Christian music. It brings refreshment, and drives away evil spirits. Whenever the anointed singer and song writer David would play his harp, “...relief would come to King Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.” (1 Samuel 16:23) Corporate singing enables true worshipers to enjoy the presence of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 says, “The trumpets and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. ...they raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: “He is good; His love endures forever,” ...The glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.” King Jehoshaphat discovered that corporate singing and praising God leads to victory over enemies. (2 Chronicles 20:21-22) For the director of music David wrote this, “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.” (Psalm 40:3) Music can provide an atmosphere for the preaching of God’s Word. In 2 Kings 3:15 we read, “While the harpist was playing, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha...”

Corporate worship also allows us to enjoy those who have the gift of music for the house of the Lord. In 1 Chronicles 25 we read that there are blessed children of God who are “trained and skilled in music for the Lord.” (1 Chronicles 25:6-7) Verse one says that it is the ministry of “prophesying.” “Prophesying” (*naba*) here is to sing songs as led by the Spirit of God. This singing uses the voice of the child of God’s in a sacred service unto the Lord under Divine impulse.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says, “It is called a ministry of prophesy which no doubt means a sort of musical proclamation of divine revelation and expressions of hymnic praise and worship.”

In early theological teaching those who were anointed for music in the house of God were referred to as “chief musicians.” Today the Biblically mature would refer to these very gifted Christians as music ministers of the Lord. What the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp in regard to the song service is Christians who have divine leading are leading corporate services to sing songs that are pleasing to the Lord.

Where does the Holy Spirit find your heart in regard to the song service? Corporate song services present to everyone the opportunity to participate in singing praise to God and about the Lord through songs He has chosen.

### **Holy Spirit gift for proclaiming God’s Word**

*Those illuminated by the Holy Spirit want to enjoy as much of the corporate song service as possible. Congregational services open the door to our enjoyment of the Holy Spirit gift for proclaiming God’s Word. Jesus said, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)*

Knowing exactly what the Bride of Christ needs to be all that she can be, Jesus apportioned grace gifts. The Apostle Paul wrote, “It was [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Any Christian exercising one or all of these support gifts has the Holy Spirit given gift of “prophecy.” Romans 12:6 says, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.” The exercising of the gift of prophesying” (*propheteia*) is “...not primarily prediction but the communication of revealed truth that will both convict and build up the hearers.” This enables the child of God to communicate to other Christians truths born of prayerful reading and study of the Word of God. This gift is divine speaking of God’s Word to bring edification, exhortation, and comfort.

Fitzmyer defines “prophecy” as “Inspired Christian preaching” and he says that “It denotes not one who predicts the future, but one who speaks in God’s name and probes the secrets of the heart.”

Respectability of the preaching of the Word of God must begin with those who possess this Holy Spirit gift of prophesying. Before the messenger can have authority in his preaching and teaching, he must first know just what the authoritative Word of God says and means, and there must be life application. Regardless of what the world’s view is on the local preacher, God’s spokesman must make it priority one to be in the Word of God.

Robert Wilson writes, "Many of the great preachers of the past had the practice of spending extended time in preparation. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, for example, closeted himself with the Bible and his study aids all morning long. He did not permit anything to interfere unless it was a genuine emergency. And when this well known British preacher arose to preach he had something valuable to say to his listeners."

The Apostle Paul has this exhortation for those who truly want to be workman approved by God, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

James Braga wrote, "But the man who is to preach the message of the Book must also be a man of the Book. He must study the Scriptures not to just get a message for his congregation. He must live in the Book. The Word of God must become his meat and drink. This is only accomplished as the preacher spends much time in secret with Jesus, holding daily, uninterrupted, unhurried communion with the Lord and His Word."

The man or woman who possesses the gift of "prophesying" must have the heart of Habakkuk who wrote, "I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what He will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it." (Habakkuk 2:1-2)

Congregational worship opens the door for the children of God to enjoy the gift of "prophesying" because the one possessing the gift has stood his watch in prayerful study of the Word of God as well as in intercession for the people to whom he is to proclaim God's message. He gets revelation (*hazon*) meaning the collection of messages and he writes them down. The Lord was telling His prophet Habakkuk just as he tells those who possess the gift of prophesying today, "Write My message down that it may hang in public display so others may read and spread the message on."

One of my favorite commentaries is the Matthew Henry Commentary. Matthew was in his study at 4:00 a.m. and remained until 8:00 a.m. After breakfast and family prayer, he would return to his place of prayer and study until 12:00 noon. After dinner he resumed to his books and pen until 4:00 p.m. Most days Matthew spent ten and half to eleven hours per day diligently writing down the message the Lord had for him, thus, leaving us with one of our greatest Bible Commentaries.

When preachers and teachers properly prepare for their part of the corporate worship service, the Body of Christ has the great privilege of hearing a fresh message from the Lord.

Where does the Holy Spirit find your heart regarding the spoken message or the teaching of God's Word? Is there joyful expectation to get to that place where the Word of God will be proclaimed? Where is your heart in making sure the messenger has time to spend uninterrupted time with the Lord?

*Corporate worship is enjoyed by those who say in their hearts, "I rejoice whenever they say, 'Let us go to that place of public worship.'" It all begins with a surrendered heart to God's will. It is enjoyed when the Body of Christ is faithful to greet one another, sing the praises of God and hunger for the Word of the Lord to be proclaimed.*

The Body of Christ needs every Holy Spirit gifted child of God in corporate worship fulfilling their place so the Body of Christ can enjoy all the benefits ordained by the Lord. Christians are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of Christ who is the light of the world. (John 8:12) Jesus said that Christians are a light of the world. (Matthew 5:14)

When one of us is gone from the congregational worship service that light is gone and no matter what place our light is, when it is gone, our city upon the hill becomes dimmer.

Whenever a root of bitterness is growing and a wrong perspective is allowed to remain, it makes the city of Christ hard to see for those who are in this dark world.

A Biblical perspective of the congregational worship service along with a joyful response to your place in the corporate worship service here at CrossRoads Church can make Christ's light shine drawing many to Him and enabling others to worship Him in spirit and truth.

Let your epistle say, "I rejoice with those who say, 'Let us go unto the house of the Lord.'"

Let us pray!!!