

What Unites Us in Worship by John Piper

John Piper has written an outstanding article on Worship in his book "Brothers, We are not Professionals". I have copied out his nine points and have given a tenth one of my own. Please read and pray how these truths may be incorporated into our worship.

1. God-centeredness.

A high priority on the vertical focus of our Sunday morning service. The ultimate aim is to so experience God that He is glorified in our affections.

2. Expecting the powerful presence of God.

We do not just direct ourselves toward Him. We earnestly seek His drawing near according to the promise of James 4:8. 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 our midst.

3. Bible based and Bible saturated.

The content of our singing and praying and welcoming and preaching and poetry will always conform to the truth of Scripture. The content of God's Word woven through all we do in worship will be the ground of all our appeal to authority.

4. Head and heart.

Worship aims at kindling and carrying deep, strong, real emotions toward God but does not manipulate people's emotions by failing to appeal to clear thinking about spiritual things based on shareable evidences outside ourselves.

5. Earnestness and intensity.

Avoid a trite, flippant, superficial, frivolous atmosphere but instead set an example of reverence and passion and wonder.

6. Authentic communication.

Utterly renounce all shame and deceit and hypocrisy and pretense and affectation and posturing. Avoid the atmosphere of artistic or oratorical performance, but cultivate the atmosphere of a radically personal encounter with God and truth.

7. The manifestation of God and the common good.

We expect and hope and pray (according to 1 Cor 12:7) that our focus on the manifesting of God is good for people and that therefore a spirit of love for one another is not incompatible with but necessary to authentic worship.

8. Undistracting excellence.

We will try to sing and play and pray and preach in such a way that people's attention will not be diverted from the substance by shoddy ministry nor by excessive finesse, elegance, or refinement. Natural, undistracting excellence will let the truth and beauty of God shine through.

9. The mingling of historic and contemporary music.

"And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old' " (Matt 13:52)

10. The Triune Community needs a worship community to reflect the reality of heaven on earth.

The real is found in heaven (Hebrews 8 :5 &9:24), and in Christ (Colossians 2:17). The shadow or pattern is found on earth.

Worship in the church on earth needs to be a copy of worship in heaven. The perfect community of the Trinity is found in heaven. The church needs to reflect unity and community in worship on earth (Romans 15:5-6).