

How Did The New Testament Church Worship?

Bible Answers About Worship

When Jesus promised, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18) He intended to make very important changes in the way people worshipped God. He established a new temple in which a new priesthood serves. The assemblies, ceremonies, and offerings of the Israelite heritage ceased. Even the age-long argument between Jews and Samaritans as to the proper place of worship became irrelevant because both are now wrong (John 4:20-24).

In the place of perpetual animal sacrifices, the Messiah offered His blood once for all time (Heb. 10:12). In this act of laying down His life for the sins of the world He laid the foundation for a new temple—a structure composed not of lifeless stones, as in the old Temple, but of living souls ("So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner {stone} in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" Eph 2:19-22 NAS). Men and women from every walk of life who submit to the Lordship of Jesus by their obedience to the gospel comprise that glorious temple. It functions as a habitation of God and a place in which spiritual sacrifices are offered ("And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" 1 Pet 2:4-5 NAS). Faithful members of the church are driven by gratitude to express their adoration, reverence, and reciprocating love to their Savior. That is, they are compelled to worship the Creator.

Jesus declared the unalterable guideline to acceptable worship. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24 NAS). Worship is to be offered to God alone. No carvings of wood, no edifices of stone, no mountain, brook, or ocean will do. "For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is {but} one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we {exist} for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we {exist} through Him" (1 Cor 8:56 NAS). Worship must be in spirit. The spirit of man, his inward center of being, of spiritual essence, must be attuned to and responsive to God in awareness of the spiritual bond between God and man made in His image. "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps 42:1-2 NAS). Just as a thirsty animal longs for the refreshing joy of a long and satisfying drink after perhaps days of thirst, so the souls of God's people should and do thirst for communion with God in worship. Worship is to be in truth. Jesus said, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). All is to be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17), that is, according to the Word of God. God declares the true attitude and activities to

be followed in His worship; man trifles with these insights at his spiritual peril. In every age, God has stipulated the ways by which man may, with divine approval express his worship (cf. Deut. 12:2-8). Today is no different. Just as God rejected Cain's offering (Gen. 4:3-7; Heb. 11:4), so God will reject modern worship if it is not according to God's will. The New Testament tells how the earliest Christians approached God in worship. Their actions serve as an approved pattern which may be followed with confidence today. Bible students have discovered that New Testament worship is expressed through five actions; singing, praying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, studying the Word of God, and contributing to a common treasury (see Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:20-34; I Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Offering acceptable worship is the exclusive right of God's children. It is a sacred privilege that we cannot afford to neglect. James wrote, "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17). The Hebrew writer wrote, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging {one another} and all the more, as you see the day drawing near" (Heb 10:24-25 NAS).

The saints meeting at the Monte Vista church of Christ worship each Lord's Day in the way the Christians worshipped in New Testament times. We invite you to follow the Bible with us on the Lord's Day.

We have other tracts that discuss each avenue of worship mentioned in this tract. Please feel to request each of these tracts. Of course, our tracts are always free of charge to everyone. We are interested only in people studying God's word and it is to this end our tracts are directed.

Visit us online at: montevista.church
or
Stop by and worship with us!

Monte Vista
church of Christ