

# The Essence of Worship

Worship is adoring God and submitting to Him in response to Who He is and what He has done. The Holy Scriptures have much to say on this vital subject. Recognizing the importance of worship and desiring to approach God on His terms, we affirm the following:

- The triune God (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)—Creator of Heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1—2:3; Exod. 20:11), thrice-holy (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8), revealed to humankind through nature (Rom. 1:19–20), the Scriptures (John 5:39), and the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2)—is the one and only true and living God (Isa. 45:5) and is therefore the only one worthy of receiving worship (Rev. 19:10; 22:9).
- Worshiping God is the chief end of humankind and the principal purpose for which we were created (Isa. 43:7, 21; Phil. 2:10–11; Rev. 5:13).
- God is seeking worshipers who will worship Him in spirit (true worship is empowered by the Holy Spirit and is not limited by spatial or physical constraints) and in truth (true worship is circumscribed by sound Biblical doctrine) (John 4:23–24).
- Worship entails loving the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength (Matt. 22:37); offering our bodies to God as living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices (Rom. 6:13; 12:1–2); and submitting ourselves fully to God’s will (James 4:7) with the aim of glorifying Him in thought, word, and deed (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17).
- Worship is the privilege and duty of all believers. We are united in our worship of God, regardless of any differences we may have with one another or any factors that may otherwise divide us (Eph. 4:4–6; Col. 3:11–17; Rev. 7:9–10).
- Corporate worship with the gathered people of God in a local church assembly is an indispensable element of proper worship, as the local church gathering is one of the principal contexts in which worship should occur (Heb. 10:24–25). However, worship is not limited to formal church gatherings; God’s people should offer Him their worship continually (Heb. 13:15).
- In this dispensation we need no merely human priest or mediator to approach God in worship; our free and full access to God as believer-priests has been purchased by Christ (Heb. 10:19–22) and is constantly open to us by means of His intercessory ministry as our Great High Priest (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25–28.)
- While there is room for cultural adaptation and creativity in the expression of worship, churches and Christians should endeavor to follow New Testament patterns of worship as closely as possible, which include the following practices:
  - Preaching and teaching (Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 4:2)
  - The public reading of Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13; Rev. 1:3)
  - Observance of the ordinances (baptism [Acts 2:41] and Communion [1 Cor. 11:23–25])
  - Prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1)
  - Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
  - Giving (Acts 11:27–30; 2 Cor. 8–9)
  - Fellowship (Eph. 4:12–17; 1 John 1:3–7)
  - Disciple-making (Matt. 28:19–20, Col. 1:28–29)

May God be ever-increasingly glorified as we, His people, seek to offer our heartfelt worship to Him.

*Resolved by the messengers of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting together in regular conference June 25–28, 2019, in Des Moines, Iowa.*