



DEFENDER OF TRUTH

MAGAZINE
JANUARY-MARCH

VOLUME 4 | NO. 1 2024

**NEW
TESTAMENT**
Worship

DEFENDER OF TRUTH

CONTENTS:

EDITORIAL

- Afolabi Akinyemi

Pg 3

WORSHIPING IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

- Afolabi Akinyemi

Pg 3

CHURCH MUSIC

- Opemipo Olusola

Pg 5

PRAYER

- Jobalo Oshikanlu

Pg 7

THE LORD'S SUPPER

- Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

Pg 9

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

- Oladapo Olawale

Pg 11

GIVING

- Kayode Adekunle

Pg 13

Defender of Truth Magazine is published quarterly.
All correspondence should be made to the editor at info@defenderoftruth.com.ng

EDITORIAL

This first edition of Defender of Truth for the year 2024 is focused on worship. Worship is important because it affects the salvation of man. Your eternal destination will be determined by whether you worship God in spirit and truth or according to the doctrines and commandments of men. The wise man, Solomon said the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. The articles in this edition will lead you to Christ and edify you.

Previous editions of the magazine can now be viewed and downloaded from the website www.defenderoftruth.com.ng. The site also has articles, books, audio and video sermons which the reader will find edifying.

WORSHIPING IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

by **Afolabi A. Akinyemi**



"Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, **and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**" (John 4:21-24)

The concluding words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the verse quoted above affirm that true worshippers **must** worship God in spirit and truth. Hence it is important to examine what it means to worship in spirit and truth. Worship is translated as ~~proskuneo~~ in the Greek New Testament and it is defined as "to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore); to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence; in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication".¹

It is clear from this definition that worship is a deliberate action with purpose. From the Holy Scriptures, we can also deduce that God has always specified the way He wants to be

worshipped. For instance, God demanded that the Israelites worship Him exclusively.

And God spoke all these words, saying:
"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
"You shall have no other gods before Me.
"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

God respected the offering of Abel but did not respect Cain's offering (Gen.4:3-5). God gave the reason He did not respect Cain's offering. "So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? **If you do well, will you not be accepted?** And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Cain did not do well because he did not do it the way God commanded it should be done. In Heb. 11:4, we are told "**By faith** Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks". Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom.10:17). Abel's offering was respected by God because he did it by faith- he obeyed the commands he heard.

In Acts 14:8-16, the men of Lystra attempted to worship Paul and Barnabas. Paul told them to "**turn from these useless things to the living God**, who made the heaven, the earth, the



sea, and all things that are in them” The Romans were rebuked for worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:18-25) and in Col. 2:6, Paul wrote to the Colossian church “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, **so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.**

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ”

All of these instances show clearly that true worship starts and ends with God and obeying His will. There is no room for human inventions in the worship of God (Isa. 55:8-9). God directs man to worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24; Josh.24:14). Worship in spirit and truth is characterized by two things. It must be directed at the right object –God (Matt. 4:9-10), and it must be performed with sincerity that is it must be with the right attitude. The right attitude involves taking the right action.

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col.3:17)

It should be noted that doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus means that all things in religion must be done under His authority. He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). His words will judge man on the last day (John 12:48). In Matt. 7:21-23, Jesus said "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.** Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Worship that conforms to the doctrine of men is in vain. “*And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men*” (Matt. 15:9). The will of Christ is revealed in the New Testament. It is the rule of faith and practice for Christians now. The Old Testament law has been fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ as He promised (Matt.5:17), therefore authority in Christianity cannot be derived from it (Col.2:14; Heb.7:11-17;8:7-13).

The New Testament reveals some things to be done by the church in worship.

1. The Lord's Supper also called the communion (Luk. 22:17-20; Matt.26:26-29)
2. Prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1-7)

3. Singing (Eph.5:19; Col.3:16)
4. Giving (1 Cor.16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7)
5. Teaching (Acts 2:42;1 Cor. 4:17)

Christians worship on the first day of the week which is Sunday (Acts 20:7;1 Cor. 16:1-2).

In conclusion, all men must realize that worship affects salvation. Worshipping in spirit and truth leads to salvation while worshipping using the commandments of men results in vain worship which is eternal damnation.

¹Mounces' Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

Afolabi A. Akinyemi is an Evangelist and works with the Church of Christ, Abaranje-Ikotun, Lagos, Nigeria. He can be reached at info@defenderoftruth.com.ng

CHURCH MUSIC

by Bro Opemipo Olusola



One of the identity marks or the uniqueness of the New Testament church is her Acapella music, that is singing without the application of any mechanical instruments. The Church as a divine institution had been eternally planned by God before the foundation of the world. Music as one of the five items of worship in the church has also been eternally planned by God and has now been revealed and accomplished through the Testament of Christ (Eph.3:9-11,21).

Music in worship serves many purposes and manifests itself in a variety of expressions. It is used both to praise God and to proclaim the word; it both expresses prayer and relates the Gospel story.

IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

God placed music in His church to achieve the following purposes;

1. Singing is one of how we express our love towards God with our whole being. We engage every part of our being in the worship of God. Worshipping through music changes and transforms us (Col.3:16, Ps.95:1).
2. Music is intentionally designed by God to move both Spirit and mind (1 Cor.14:15).
3. It is meant to ascribe Praises and Thanksgiving unto God (Heb.13:15, Acts.16:25, Rm.15:9)
4. It is meant for teaching and admonishing one another (Eph.5:19; Col.3:16)

THE COMMAND TO SING IS SPECIFIC AND EXCLUDES ALL OTHER KINDS OF MUSIC

There are three kinds of music;

1. Singing (Acapella)

2. Instrumental music
3. The combination of acapella and instrumental music

The New Testament scriptures authorize singing only. Please consider the following Bible verses.

“when they had sung a hymn, they went out” (Matt.26:30)

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God” (Acts.16:25)

“I will sing with the Spirit and I will sing with the understanding also” (1Cor.14:15)

“Singing one to another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts unto God” (Eph.5:19)

“Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Heb.13:15)

Other New Testament passages that authorize vocal music are Col.3:16, Jam.5:13, Heb.2:12 and Rm.15:9.

The commands of God which are specific exclude all other things in the category of what is specified. For instance, when God commanded Noah to build the ark of gopher wood, other kinds of wood were excluded (Gen.16:14).

God's command to sing excludes any other kind of music. There are only three kinds – vocal, instrumental and the combination of both vocal and instrumental.

God has specified vocal music. When something more is done than “sing” God has been disobeyed (2Jn.1:9-11; 1Cor.4:6)



CHARACTERISTICS OF CHURCH MUSIC

1. The songs must be directed as praise unto God and not for entertaining the people or else it becomes vain and abominable (Acts.16:25; Rm.15:9).
2. Our singing must be done in spirit (1 Cor.14:15). Our hearts must accompany our singing and be thoroughly in accord with the sentiment of the song being sung.
3. Our songs must be rendered with a good understanding of their lyrics. (1 Cor.14:15). One can hardly sing sincerely what one does not understand. We need to be sure that our song's expression or lyrics are scriptural.
4. Everyone must be involved in church singing, "speaking one to another" (Eph.5:19). This scriptural phrase reveals that every Christian in a local church is a part of the choir while God Almighty is the only audience of our worship. Therefore, it amounts to human tradition for a religious assembly to have choir group(s) (Ps.22:27-28).
5. The kind of songs to be selected for worship must be spiritual in expression, "Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph.5:19; Col.3:16). Worldly rhythms to arouse the sensual feelings of the worshippers must be avoided (Rm.12:2).

Our songs aim to teach, admonish and make the words of Christ dwell richly in us, Col.3:16.

6. The song-leading in the church must be directed by a man, not by a woman. The divine order in 1 Tim.2:11-12 applies to every place of public worship. "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence".

The church is a New Testament Institution. Her standard of faith today is the New Testament laws. God has spoken unto us today through Christ. The words or teachings of Christ are found in the New Testament. (Col.3:17; Heb.1:2; 2Jn.1:9).

Worship activities like the use of instruments of music that seek justification from the Old Testament put one under obligation to keep the Old Testament laws (Gal. 5:1-4). The old law has been taken away through the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14; Heb.7:12,18,19; 8:6-13).

The New Testament scriptures are silent about instrumental music. The silence of the scriptures must be respected by the faithful Christians. Silence means prohibition not permission (1

Pet.4:11). Nadab and Abihu ignored the silence of the scriptures and suffered the dire consequence (Lev.10:1-2).



CONCLUSION

Worship that appeals to our fleshly appetites cannot be acceptable with God (Rom.8:5-8, Isa.55:8). Musical instruments are not "aids" but addition to the teaching of Christ (2Jn.9; Rev.22:18-19).

To be saved "you must repent of both your religious errors and moral sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts.2:38; Rom.6:17).

Opemipo Olusola is an evangelist and works with the Church of Christ, Itafaaji Ibadan, Nigeria. He can be contacted at opemipoolusola@yahoo.com

PRAYER

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

Bible Gems: "Your prayers ... have come up to God and have been remembered by Him" AMPC (Acts 10:4). "He who turns away his ear from hearing the law of God, even his prayer is an abomination, hateful and revolting to God" AMPC (Proverbs 28:9).

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or another deity. However, *"although there may be so-called gods (deities), whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many of them, both of gods and of lords and masters, yet for us there is [only] one God, the Father, Who is the Source of all things and for Whom we [have life], and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through and by Whom are all things and through and by Whom we [ourselves exist]"* (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). Hence, all prayers in the spiritual sense should be addressed to God the Father, through Jesus Christ (John 16:23; Ephesians 3:14).

Indeed, *"I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord Who made heaven and earth"* (Psalm 121:1-2). The Bible says that *"the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil"* (Psalm 34:15 and 1 Peter 3:12).

One of the greatest biblical accounts of what prayer to God is can be found in the example of Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. 1 Samuel chapter 1, vs.10 records that *"Hannah was in distress of soul, praying to the Lord and weeping bitterly"*. How was she praying? Verse 13 describes that *"Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved but her voice was not heard"*. The priest at the time who was not used to seeing such a sight *"thought she was drunk"*. However, she replied, *"I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I was pouring out my soul before the Lord"* (vs.15). Prayer, then, means pouring out one's soul before God.

WHY PRAY?

Children or worshippers of God must pray because, rather than prayer being an empty exercise to make us feel better, we can be assured that, provided we pray in harmony with God's will, He does hear and grant our requests (1 John 5:14-15). Worshippers of God must also speak to the Father regularly as an important part of our daily lives because we are so commanded by God (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

We have several beautiful examples of prayerful servants of

God to learn from, including the example of the life of our Master Himself, Jesus Christ, who began His public ministry with prayer immediately following His baptism by John, closed His work on earth with prayer in the garden and on the cross, and regularly and sincerely communed with His Father in prayer throughout His walk here on earth (Luke 6:12). The early church also left an approved example of regular prayer (Acts 12:5). We ought to pray regularly because prayer with faith, rather than confidence in human solutions, is the refuge and comfort for the child of God from the heartaches and worries of this life (Philippians 4:6-7). It is such great peace and comforting reassurance we have from God that we can always carry all our troubles to the One Who always cares and Who can and will always help us (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16; Matthew 11:28).

WHOSE PRAYER WILL GOD HEAR?

Our Bible gem above is clear that the prayer of anyone is useless who cares nothing for the word of God or pays inadequate attention to learning His will from the Bible (Proverbs 28:9; 2 Timothy 2:15; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 4:4).

It is the prayers of the "righteous" that God's ears are "open" to (1 Peter 3:12). "Righteousness" here consists in *"keeping His commandments and doing those things that are pleasing to Him"* (1 John 3:22; Psalm 119:172). Those things that are pleasing to Him are defined in the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17) which every man and woman must believe (Mark 1:15; John 3:35-36), and then repent of all sin (1 John 5:17; Acts 17:30-31), confess their faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10), be baptised in water for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and regularly worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24). The foregoing, in essence, was the message preached to Cornelius and his household in Acts chapter 10. In our Bible gem, Cornelius' prayers had come to God only for a "memorial". He was directed to send for the apostle Peter *"who would tell [him] words by which [him] and all [his] household would be saved"* (Acts 11:13-14). He had to be baptized in water to be saved (Acts 10:47-48).

God will not hear just anyone's prayer. He will only accept the petitions of those who are in heart and life righteous, as He wants us to be. For our heart also to be righteous when we



approach the Father, we must truly believe he will hear us (James 1:6-7), pray sincerely, not just to be heard or seen of men (Matthew 6:5-6), approach Him in humility (1 Peter 5:6-7) speaking to Him in reverence, not with the brash familiarity with which we address our peers, nor with arrogant authoritativeness that is observed of many denominational devotees (Psalm 111:9; 89:7). We must not ask selfishly (James 4:3), we must truly repent of our sins (Acts 8:22) and maintain a forgiving attitude toward those who wrong us (Matthew 6:14-15).

HOW ARE WE TO PRAY?

The Father refuses to listen to or grant some kind of prayers. Some denominational devotees, in prayers, claim to be addressing Satan or imaginary spirits or commanding physical or invisible elements or making pronouncements on diseases or other maladies or even on their enemies. Rather, as children of God, the object of our requests, i.e., the One to be addressed always, should be God (Matthew 6:9). We should never address the virgin Mary, dead saints, angels, any other created being, nor should we address Satan or any visible or invisible elements or maladies. Also, the avenue of our prayer, i.e., the One through Whom we must pray, must be Jesus Christ (Romans 1:8; John 16:23), not the virgin Mary or any saints or other prophet. In all our petitions we must strive to be "according to His will" (1 John 5:14-15; Matthew 26:39), i.e., in harmony with the word and will of God. The time we should pray is "always" (Ephesians 6:18) and the place to pray is "everywhere" (1 Timothy 2:8).

FOR WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY?

The heavenly Father has not promised to give us anything and everything we desire or ask in prayer, but He has promised to grant certain supplications. Children of God may and should pray for forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:22), for deliverance from temptation (Matthew 6:13), for wisdom (James 1:5), for deliverance or comfort in afflictions (James 5:13), for physical health and healing from sickness (James 5:14-15), and for our material needs (Matthew 6:11).

The Father will also hear our scriptural intercessions. We should pray that God's will might be done (Matthew 6:10), determining to be faithful instruments in carrying out His revealed will. We should intercede on behalf of gospel preachers, so that they might be presented with opportunities and abilities to reach the lost with the gospel and that they might faithfully and effectively proclaim the truth (Colossians 4:2-4). Christians are required to pray for "all men", particularly

those "in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2) and for the health of others (James 5:16). We must remember to sincerely intercede for the welfare of the church, that the Christians "*might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*" (Colossians 1:9).

Finally, more than all people, children of God must always be thankful for the Father's blessings. We must "*in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

IN CLOSING

Faithful Christians with genuine faith are the ones who "*pray without ceasing*" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is the ultimate expression of our faith in God and His Christ. The Lord once spoke a parable to teach "*that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*", that is, not to give up (Luke 18:1). Having spoken of a widow who persistently troubled an unjust judge until he finally granted her request, to emphasize the surety that the just and merciful Father will speedily hear His children, the Master concluded by inquiring: "*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8).

In the last verse just quoted, "faith" is synonymous with "prayer". When we pray, we have no miraculous proof that God hears us. We have only faith in the promises of His word because WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT (2 Corinthians 5:7).

-
- i. Several scripture quotations in this article have been taken from the Amplified Bible Classic Edition (AMPC), but otherwise from the New King James' version (NKJV). Scripture quotations here are set out in italics, in certain cases with emboldening for emphasis.
 - ii. Middle English: from Old French *preiere*, based on Latin *precarius* meaning "obtained by entreaty".
-

Jobalo Oshikanlu is a member of the Church of Christ, Iju, Lagos, Nigeria. He can be reached at jobalo99@yahoo.com

THE LORD'S SUPPER

by Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba



THE LORD'S SUPPER

One of the acts of worship the New Testament church engaged in was the Lord's Supper. It is also called "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7), "the Communion" (I Corinthians 10:16), or "the Lord's table" (I Corinthians 10:21). In Acts 2:42, we read that the church in Jerusalem "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." We also find in Acts 20:7 that the Christians in the city of Troas "came together to break bread" on the first day of the week (Sunday). Paul, in writing to the Christians in Corinth describes this activity thus: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?... You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons." (I Corinthians 10:16, 21).

Faithful churches of the Lord today must follow this example and continue steadfastly in partaking of the Lord's Supper among other acts of worship until the Lord comes again as the apostle, Paul, instructed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (I Corinthians 11:26). In this writing, we are going to look at what the Lord's Supper is, its purpose and some misconceptions about it.

WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?

The Lord's Supper is a feast, a memorial, a remembrance that honours our Lord Jesus Christ. This feast was instituted by Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed. In Matthew 26:26-29, we read: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit

of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'" The apostle Paul delivered the same to the church in Corinth: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'" In the same manner, He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (I Corinthians 11:23-25)

THE PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

This memorial reminds us that the Son of God came to the world, suffered, and died for us. As seen in Matthew 26:26-29, there are two elements used in the Lord's Supper – the bread and fruit of the vine. The bread symbolizes the body of Christ while the fruit of the vine symbolizes His blood. As Paul said, as we continuously partake of the Lord's Supper, we are remembering the Lord's death until He comes. Only Christians are eligible to partake of the Supper as we see in Acts 20:7 and the frequency of observance is on the first day of every week. The Lord's Supper reminds us of Jesus' presence with us.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER

Transubstantiation: This is the idea that in the Lord's Supper (Catholics call this the "Eucharist"), emblems are miraculously changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 26:27-28 "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" The Catholics take that to mean the fruit of the vine supernaturally changed to the literal blood of Jesus when He gave thanks. But Catholics ignore the very next verse (29) which would falsify this position - "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Notice Jesus is now calling the liquid "fruit of the vine," not His blood. So had it already changed back to juice just moments after it had changed to Jesus' literal blood? Or was Jesus using a metaphor all along, like when He said "I am the door" (John 10:9)? When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper before His death, He said, "This is My body," and, "This is My blood," clearly showing that they were symbols of His body and blood.

When we partake of the Lord's Supper today, we partake of the bread and fruit of the vine, which represent the body and



blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Frequency of Observance: Acts 20:7 reveals that the early Christians partook of the Supper *"upon the first day of the week."* Every week has a first day, and so, Christians today have the authority to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ's death upon the first day of the week. Many denominational churches today partake of the Lord's Supper monthly, yearly or at a particular occasion. This has no scriptural precedent or justification and is simply the commandment of men (Matthew 15:1-9).

Substituting the Elements: We have no authority to substitute the elements Jesus authorized to be used in the Lord's Supper with any other thing. Some people use Coke and wafers but this is wrong as we do not have any justification for that from God's word.

Common Meal: Paul warned that the Lord's Supper should not be taken as a common meal. *"If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that you can come together and not cause judgment"* (1 Corinthians 11:34) It appears that in light of 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 and the verse just cited, the Corinthians had abused the Lord's Supper by incorporating it into a common meal. Paul specifically tells the Corinthians not to do such for they are bringing judgment upon themselves.

Should only the bread be eaten? In some denominational churches, the congregation takes only the bread during Communion and would not take the fruit of the vine. But Paul tells the Christians in 1 Corinthians 11:26 *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* Obedience to this command demands that Christians should eat the bread and drink of the fruit of the vine just like it was done in Matthew 26:26-29. Doing anything short of this is simply disobedience and rebellion.



CONCLUSION

Our worship to God must be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). This means that we must worship God according to how He wants us to worship Him and not as we desire. The Lord's Supper is one of the items of worship for Christians today. Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to partake of it in His remembrance. To be pleasing to Him and offer acceptable worship unto Him, we must observe the Lord's Supper regularly every first day of the week and in the right manner, until He comes again. Doing anything more or less in remembrance of Him would make our worship to be in vain (Matthew 15:8-9).

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba is an Evangelist and works with the Church of Christ, Epe, Lagos, Nigeria.
He can be contacted on osamagbelesley1@gmail.com

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

by Oladapo Olawale

Worshipping God entails doing so in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To worship God in truth, however, means to do so in accordance with His word (John 17:17) which is His revealed standard. By implication everything done in worship to God must conform to His revealed pattern and standard (Col 3:16–17). We would not know how God intends us to worship Him unless through His laid down guidelines, otherwise we would be engaged in our willful practice which is tantamount to vain worship. (Matthew 15:9)

Therefore, to know and practice correctly what God commands, His Word needs to be taught and preached. Jesus Christ made continuous teaching of His commands a requirement for all His disciples- they are to be taught to observe all of His commands (Matthew 28:19). The early disciples were taught and continued in the Apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42; 20:7), that is, the teachings they have received from Christ (John 17:8; Galatians 1:11-12). The Apostle Paul commanded Timothy to commit unto faithful men, the things he (Timothy) had been taught by Paul, so that they may also be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).



Teaching or preaching the word of God is a vital part of our worship to God because in doing so we show the value He has placed on His word which He in turn expects us to devote ourselves to practice. There can be no doubt whatsoever that teaching the word of God is an act of worship. Paul described preaching the gospel as a ministration towards sanctification (Romans 15:15-16). Indeed, the word of God is the means by which we are sanctified or made holy (John 17:17). When we obey the gospel message, we are sanctified by it, and we remain sanctified if we continue to obey the word of grace which ultimately gives us a place in heaven (Acts 20:32). When we teach and preach the word of God, our hearts are drawn

closer to God as we are moved to know the mind of God; the church is thus edified when the word of God is taught (Acts 20:32).

WHAT DO WE TEACH?

Whenever the early Christians gather to worship, they teach and listen to the word (Acts 2:42; 20:7) as contained in the scriptures because all the scripture is “profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The teaching of the church is not about different subjects as taught in secular schools, local and world politics, comic and pleasant stories, personal opinions or human philosophy rather it is teaching that is based on the truth of the scriptures. This teaching draws the hearts of its listeners to the scriptures and allows the saving power of the gospel alone to work in their hearts (Romans 1:16). Timothy was urged by Paul to “preach the word” and maintain its soundness for the simple reason that men love to hear fables rather than the truth (2 Timothy 4:1–5).

Not only must this teaching be scripturally based, but it must also follow a pattern of sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; Titus 2:1, 2). Conscious efforts must be made to ensure that the teaching is sound. To be sound means that the teaching is correct, healthy, fit, free from error or any speculations whatsoever and in accordance with God's pattern revealed in the scriptures. This means that sound teaching is based on a diligent effort to rightly divide (correctly interpret) the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). Sound scriptural doctrine does not consist of strange teachings condoning immorality (1 Timothy 1:3–11 n. v 10). It is by the glorious gospel of God (1 Timothy 1:11); not according to human philosophy and traditions (Colossians 2:8); to preach sound doctrine means staying within the bounds of the doctrine of Christ as also delivered by the Apostles (2 John 9; Galatians 1:6–9); devoid of any denominational and man-made doctrine.

As already mentioned, the word of God being preached must edify or build up Christians unto holiness, (Acts 20:32). Its focus is therefore not how to become a millionaire and prosper materially. The preaching must be presented to reach the soul and spirit of man confronting and convicting of sin because the word of God is living and active (Hebrews 4:12) and it is the mirror by which we can see ourselves as God would want us to be seen (James 1:24–25). Biblical preaching must be bold, without fear or favour (Ephesians 6: 20; Acts 20:27), yet done in love and genuine concern for every soul (Ephesians 4:15).





WHO IS TO DO THE TEACHING?

The Bible commands all men to do the preaching whenever the church gathers. The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Timothy 2:12 thus: 'And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence'. By this, a woman is prohibited from teaching or doing anything where she exercises authority over a man. A similar admonition is contained in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. God has ordained men to lead His worship, and this is not subject to any changes in societal culture as it is a universal command for all ages (1 Corinthians 11:16; 14:33,34-37).

The teaching of the church must be done by faithful men (2 Timothy 2:2) whose conduct and way of life reflects what they teach. During the assembly of God, care must be taken to not allow brothers whose conduct does not befit the gospel of Christ to take teaching positions so that they will not hinder the cause of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:12). These faithful men who teach must have the ability to do so having been well trained (2 Timothy 2:2) with a gentle, patient, and humble spirit in presenting God's word (2 Timothy 2:24).

When preaching is done by faithful men of God, it must not be with smooth words and flattery to deceive and confound the listeners (Romans 16:18). Again, like the Apostle Paul, faithful men should not make excellent speech or human wisdom as the basis of their preaching. They should simply preach Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1) in plain words that illustrate the simplicity of the gospel message that men can understand.

CONCLUSION

To worship God in truth means we must do so according to His word. The word of God lays down a pattern for us for all things that pertain to life and godliness, and this includes how we

ought to worship Him (2 Peter 1:3). We are not permitted to worship God according to the traditions and commandments of men because this will amount to vain worship (Matthew 15:8-9). The word of God reveals to us that true worship to God involves preaching, prayers (Acts 2:42; 20:36), partaking of the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), collection for the saints (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) and singing (Ephesians 5:19). Everything we do in word or deed must be done in the name of Christ (i.e. by the authority or commands of Christ) (Colossians 3:16-17).

Oladapo Olawale is a member of the Church of Christ, Abaranje-Ikotun, Lagos.
He can be contacted at waledapsy@gmail.com

GIVING

by Kayode Adekunle

In the Old Testament, tithing was one of the major laws God gave to the Jews. The Bible says in Leviticus 27:30 "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD" Solomon says in Proverbs 3:9 "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."

The history of tithing can be traced to Gen 14: 18-20 where Abraham met Melchizedek when he was coming from his war to rescue Lot and he gave Melchizedek one-tenth of the spoils of war and received blessings from him. We also see the example of Jacob in Gen 28:22. God re-enacted this when He commanded 11 tribes of the Jews to pay tithe to the tribe of Levites whom He has appointed as His priests (Num 18:25-28; Deut 14:22-24; Heb 7:1-10). With the aforementioned verses, it is evident the idea of giving has been very dear to the heart of God. It is noteworthy to mention that tithing as a method of giving ceased to operate when the New Testament came into effect (Gal 3:23-27; Col 2:14-17; Heb 7:1-12). It is not surprising that the issue of Giving also features prominently in the New Testament, especially when the Church started.

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The idea of giving when the Church started in the New Testament was necessitated by the need for the Church to carry out her divinely given mission, particularly benevolence. Acts 4:32-37 shows how the Christians in Jerusalem contributed money. "Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need". Acts 11:29; Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1-2; 11 Cor 8:1-3; 9:1-13 all show records of Christians engaging in acts of benevolence on the strength of their contribution.



THE NATURE OF GIVING IN THE CHURCH

Done on the First Day of the Week: It must be emphasized that the only day revealed in the New Testament that Christians did collection is on the first day of the week. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1 Cor 16:1-2). The implication of this is very clear, in the New Testament, the collection is not done on any other day other than "the first day of the week"

Done as Prospered by God: Christians are ordered to give "as they are prospered" (1 Cor 16:2). This no doubt, indicates the liberty given to Christians to determine in their minds what to give. Paul says "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart" (11 Cor 9:6). This is different from what was obtainable under the old law where the Jews were mandated by God to give one-tenth of their possessions (Num 18:25).

Done cheerfully without grudges: It is important to note that the "act of giving" has always been accompanied by "blessings" from God. Christ says "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). In Luke 6:38, Christ says "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." The principle of cheerful giving and God's blessings in the New Testament is emphasized in 11 Cor 9:6-8.

HOW THE CHURCH MONEY IS SPENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

The church's needs are broadly classified into two in the New Testament, these are the physical and the spiritual and these two are expected to be taken care of. In Acts 6:1-5 when the Hellenists women at the Church in Jerusalem complained of being neglected in daily distribution, the Apostles asked the brethren to appoint seven men amongst them to take care of the matter while they devote themselves to "prayer and to the ministry of the word"

The physical need has to do with acts of benevolence towards the needy in a local Church. A local church is obliged to take care of the needy amongst her. We have a perfect example of this in Acts 4: 32-37, verses 34-35 show how the money contributed was "laid at the Apostles feet and distributed to each as anyone had need". The local church is also obliged to take care of "the widows indeed" amongst



them 1 Tim 5:16. We equally have examples of local churches in Antioch, Macedonia and Corinth sending “relief” to the brethren in Judea as a result of a “great famine” they experienced (Acts 11:29; Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1-3, 11 Cor 8:1-4). From the spiritual angle, the local Church is mandated by the Holy Spirit to pay the wages of the Evangelists working with them. Paul says this to the Church in Corinth *“Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel”* (1 Cor 9:13-14). A local Church can also support Evangelist (s) working on the field or with other congregations (11 Cor 11:7-8).

Apart from this, the Church is also expected to spend money on things that could aid fellowship and worship i.e. a meeting hall, bread and fruit of the vine for the Lord's Supper, the printing of tracts and other things to aid evangelism and edification (Acts 2:42).



CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ says this in John 4: 23-24 *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

The acts of true worship came into existence when the church started on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, “and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine” (Acts 2:41-42). There is no doubt that one of the major acts of worship the early Christians continued steadfastly in, is Giving. This is evident in Paul's statement in 1 Cor 16:1-3.

Christians are admonished to emulate the Christians in Macedonia in their giving who were selfless in their giving (11 Cor 8:3).

Kayode Adekunle is an Evangelist and works with the Church of Christ, Olota-Abule Egba, Lagos. His email address is kayodeadekunle70@gmail.com.