



GROUP WORSHIP

A RESEARCH PAPER  
BY  
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" Worship is the highest privilege and the first duty of all created intelligences. Worship is the conscious and joyous act of recognizing and acknowledging the truth and fact of the intimate and personal relationships of the Creators with their creatures. " ( pg. 303 )

This Perfectioner of Wisdom from Uversa goes on to say that:

"Worship is the highest joy of Paradise existence. The mode of worship on Paradise is utterly beyond mortal comprehension, but the spirit of it you can begin to appreciate even down here on Urantia, for the spirits of the Gods even now indwell you, hover over you, and inspire you to true worship. "

In my studies of worship, more specifically, group worship, I discovered that the path to both individual and group worship is prayer. On page 1618 in THE DISCOURSE ON PRAYER, the Master says:

" The ideal prayer is a form of spiritual communion which leads to intelligent worship. "

page 1621: " Prayer will lead the mortals of earth up to the communion of true worship. "

" Prayer and its associated worship is a technique of detachment from the daily routine of life, from the monotonous grind of material existence. "

And again this is stated on page 1739:

" Believers must increasingly learn how to step aside from the rush of life - escape the harassments of material existence - while they refresh the soul, inspire the mind, and renew the spirit by worshipful communion. "

Page 1100:

" The more healthful attitude of spiritual meditation is to be found in reflective worship and in the prayer of thanksgiving. "

On page 1640 we read that Jesus " . . . did exhort his believers to employ prayer as a means of leading up through thanksgiving to true worship. Jesus deplored that so little of the spirit of thanksgiving was to be found in the prayers and worship of his followers. He quoted from the Scriptures on this occasion, saying:

' It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to the name of the Most High, to acknowledge his loving-kindness every morning and his faithfulness every night, for God has made me glad through his work. In everything I will give thanks according to the will of God. ' "

Notice the pattern: Prayer - leading to thanksgiving - leading to true worship. Prayer, thanksgiving, and worship.

So we come to prayer and think of Jesus, the Master Pray-er of all time. As a child he insisted on having his little talks with his Father in heaven. On page 1389 we read:

" After his father's death Jesus tried to teach the older children to express themselves individually in prayer - much as he so enjoyed doing - but they could not grasp his thought and would invariably fall back upon their memorized prayer forms. At last, Jesus gave up the idea of having each member of the family formulate spontaneous prayers. "

Jesus considered prayer to be a spontaneous expression of the attitude of the soul toward the spirit.

" Modern man is perplexed by the thought of talking things over with God in a purely personal way. Many have abandoned regular praying; they only pray when under unusual pressure - in emergencies. " ( pg. 1001 ) The Chief of the Urantia Midwayers continues to state that prayer " . . . is a spontaneous outburst of God-consciousness. " and calls prayer " the most potent spiritual-growth stimulus. " ( pg. 1002 )

( pg. 1641 )

" Jesus taught his followers that, when they had made their prayers to the Father, they should remain for a time in silent receptivity to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul. The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship. We worship God by the aid of the Father's indwelling spirit and by the illumination of the human mind through the ministry of truth. Worship, taught Jesus, makes one increasingly like the being who is worshiped. worship is a transforming experience whereby the finite gradually approaches and ultimately attains the presence of the Infinite. "

In prayer we detach ourselves from the gross weight of the material existence. In silent receptivity we enlarge the soul's capacity for spiritual communion.

" Prayer . . . does so often dig out larger and deeper channels wherein the divine bestowals may flow to the hearts and souls of those who thus remember to maintain unbroken communion with their Maker through sincere prayer and true worship. " (pg. 2066 )

On page 2089 the URANTIA Book says, in reference to Jesus:

"The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intellegent prayer and sincere worship - unbroken communion with God - and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extradorinary religious practices. "

Prayer - Thanksgiving - worship - Silent Receptivity  
Consciousness of the PRESENCE of God

Study the TEACHINGS ABOUT PRAYER AND WORSHIP on page 1616, a portion of which states:

" Worship - contemplation of the spiritual - must alternate with service, contact with material reality.

The strain of living - the time tension of personality - should be relaxed by the restfulness of worship. "

" Worship is the technique of looking to the One for the inspiration of service to the many. Worship is the yardstick which measures the extent of the soul's detachment from the material universe and its simultaneous and secure attachment to the spiritual realities of all creation. "

" Prayer is self-reminding - sublime thinking; worship is self-forgetting - superthinking. Worship is effortless attention, true and ideal soul rest, a form of restful spiritual exertion. "

Page 65, TRUE WORSHIP, should also be studied in its entirety. Consider the following:

" Worship is for its own sake; prayer embodies a self - or creature - interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer. "

" Worship asks nothing and expects nothing for the worshiper. "

" The moment the element of self-interest intrudes upon worship, that instant devotion translates from worship to prayer and more appropriately should be directed to the person of the Eternal Son or the Creator Son. But in practical religious experience there exists no reason why prayer should not be addressed to God the Father as a part of true worship. "

" When you deal with the practical affairs of your daily life, you are in the hands of the spirit personalities having origin in the Third Source and Center; you are co-operating with the agencies of the Conjoint Actor. And so it is: You worship God; pray to, and commune with, the Son; and work out the details of your earthly sojourn in connection with the intelligences of the Infinite Spirit operating on your world and throughout your universe. "

On page 402 a Vorondadek Son stationed on Urantia says:

" Worship is the badge of spiritual - ascension candidacy. "

1621: " As prayer may be likened to recharging the spiritual batteries of the soul, so worship may be compared to the act of tuning in the soul to catch the universe broadcasts of the Infinite spirit of the Universal Father. "

1123: " The reflective powers of the mind are deepened and broadened by worship. Prayer may enrich the life, but worship illuminates destiny. "

But is all of our praying and worshiping to be done alone? We know of our personal and intimate relationship with Our Father, but what about praying and worshiping as a group? Is this a part of our practice? As students of The URANTIA Book - and we are all students - is there any mention of group worship? Thank God there is! On page 1001 we are told:

" There is a certain danger associated with overmuch private praying which is corrected and prevented by group praying, community devotions. "

A Melchizedek of Nebadon states ( pg. 1092 ) :

" There is a real purpose in the socialization of religion. It is the purpose of group religious activities to dramatize the loyalties of religion; to magnify the lures of truth, beauty, and goodness; to foster the attraction of supreme values; to enhance the service of unselfish fellowship; to glorify the potentials of family life; to promote religious education; to provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance; and to encourage group worship. "

One of the most supportive statements on group prayer is presented by the Chief of the Urantia Midwayers:

" But prayer need not always be individual. Group or congregational praying is very effective in that it is highly socializing in its repercussions. When a group engages in community prayer for moral

enhancement and spiritual uplift, such devotions are reactive upon the individuals composing the group; they are all made better because of participation. Even a whole city or an entire nation can be helped by such prayer devotions."

If we are truly living these teachings, how can we not worship together? All of us - all of us - suffer from the symptoms of some degree of personality isolation. Even with The URANTIA Book it is still difficult for us to socialize and blend our personalities. This is an art which must be mastered ( ever notice how much time is spent on the constellation training worlds of Edentia learning to socialize ? ). We can, and we must make the effort now.

Prayer and worship must evolve. We learn to walk by walking. We learn to sing by singing. We learn to pray and worship by praying and worshipping. This simply cannot be comprehended as fact first. It must be experienced with an open and willing mind. Anyone who holds on to an attitude of indifference, skepticism, or continues to identify with negative experiences in more traditional or ritualized group worship, will simply not be able to experience the transforming power of these teachings. We must be persistent and regular in our efforts.

In my own experience I have come to cherish the moments of spontaneous prayer and worship in the fellowship of my brothers and sisters of the spirit. What a blessed way to share God's LOVE!

Jesus said, " Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. And that is just the reason why I have so often taught you that the kingdom of heaven can best be realized by acquiring the spiritual attitude of a sincere child. It is not the mental immaturity of the child that I commend to you but rather the spiritual simplicity of such an easy-believing and fully-trusting little one. It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to feel the presence of God." ( pg. 1733 )

I believe that if we could all feel the presence of God, we would not experience the difficulty we have in relating to group worship - and especially the Remembrance Supper. If we could feel the presence of God we would no longer be disturbed by the symbolism of the bread and wine, instead, we would transcend these useful "tools" of remembrance to the heights of worship in the heart-feeling centers of our souls.

God is everywhere - this statement is probably as overworked and as misunderstood as 'God is Love.' What good does it do to nod our heads in intellectual awareness while we are numb to feeling His presence? It is time to come out of the cocoon and let the spiritual child within have a chance to live and pray and thank and worship. When these spiritual children gather together, let them joyously sing praises and worship together in the presence of their Father. Feel the spiritual child within and that child will teach you how to feel Our Father.

Think of our children, children raised with these teachings and nurtured in homes where they are introduced to prayer and worship by their earth mother and earth father. Look to the family of Jesus - Jesus the earth father who incorporated daily prayer and worship sessions as a group, as a family.

It is our challenge to breathe new life and new meaning into group prayer and group worship. Let us joyously and gladly proclaim the living reality of these teachings together. As sons and daughters of God, celebrate the Spirit, step into the heart-beat of Eternity and worship together! We are the friends of God. We are the children of Light. We don't have to wait until we get to Havona to experience what our own Urantia Book calls " . . . the highest privilege and first duty of all created intellegences. " My brothers and sisters, with all the demands of the material existence, while we are given this precious time together, how can we not be moved to worship?



Truly, we must remember we are children - spiritual children. We must humble ourselves before these teachings and with the Grace of the Master flowing through us, remember who we are and why we are here.

We can worship together without fear of creating a new church or religion. There is no set formula or ritual we must adhere to. Simply assent to the experience, be thankful for the privilege, and let it grow.

We can thank Our Father together, in silence, in spontaneous expressions of gratitude, and in musical harmony because we love the Father, Eternal Son, Infinite Spirit, Jesus, and one another. If we would only feel this love it would move us, touch us, embrace us, and envelop us in thanksgiving and worship.

Beholding each other with the eyes of the spirit, seeing each other with an eternal and ever new sense of recognition, realizing the reason we Love each other at all is because it is Our Father's Love we give and receive. We are all His children. We are all brothers and sisters.

" The enlightened worlds all recognize and worship the Universal Father. " ( page 21 )

Can you imagine how the enlightened worlds all recognize and worship the Universal Father? It must be fantastic.