

## Preparing for the Worship Assembly

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### Introduction: “What’s your Attitude toward Worship?”

- A. Our time to worship together is a very important occasion.
1. When we come together for worship, we are acknowledging God’s greatness and giving Him the glory that is due Him.
  2. Even the word “worship” suggests something very important and special (e.g., Ps. 95:6; Rev. 11:6).

**WORSHIP** -- to bow down, to prostrate oneself before someone superior in homage or great respect, to honor and reverence.

3. When we come together for “worship” we are indeed engaging in a very important and special act of reverence towards the Lord Almighty!
- B. However, there is the danger of our worship becoming *common*.
1. If we aren’t careful, we may be guilty of turning worship services into *mere* repetitions of traditions and weekly routines.
  2. As a consequence, worship services are taken lightly, taken for granted, and then people make no spiritual preparation for worship services.
  3. We must guard against worshipping God out of mere routine or tradition, lest we worship God in vain (**Mat. 15:7-9**).

### I. We Prepare Because We Must Worship in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23-24).

- A. Worship in Spirit
1. Our minds and hearts need to be focused on God as we worship.
  2. Our mind cannot be allowed to drift off into space and wander about; we must give our **undivided** attention (cf. **1 Cor. 14:15**).
- B. Worship in Truth
1. We must worship according to the word of God (**John 17:17**).
  2. Nothing can be added or taken away from that pattern found in the word of God (**Rev. 22:18-19**).

### II. Preparing For Worship: Learning from the Example of Jacob (Gen. 35:1-4).

- As a preparation for this journey to Bethel to worship the Lord, Jacob demanded from his family that they (1) Put away idols (2) Purify themselves (3) Change their clothes.

A. “*Put away the foreign gods.*”

  1. Jacob had been faithful in teaching his family about Jehovah and His promises, but he had been negligent in insisting that they discard *completely* all remnants of idolatry.
  2. Christians today must put away *all* forms of idolatry if they are to worship the Lord acceptably (**Mat. 4:10; 1 John 5:21**).
  3. Idolatry involves an excessive admiration or devotion to something or someone (e.g., **Col. 3:5**).
  4. The Lord knows when we have made something or someone more important than Him (**Mat. 6:24**).

5. When this occurs, that something or someone has become a "god" or idol to us (e.g., career, entertainment; recreation; materialism; spouse).
6. Preparing for worship requires that we put God first in our lives and hearts (**Mat. 22:37-38**).
7. Putting away all "foreign gods" in our lives requires taking inventory of our lives and discarding anything that hinders our worship to God.

B. "Purify yourselves"

1. Jacob's household would purify themselves in the sense of physical cleanliness, ceremonial cleanness, and/ or moral cleanness.
2. Centuries later, the people of Judah were a wicked people and because of this, God did not regard their worship as acceptable (**Isa. 1:13-16**).
3. Christians today must also purify themselves (**2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim 2:21; cf. 1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22**).
4. Moral cleansing and humility is essential to worship God (**Jas. 4:8-10**).

C. "Change your garments."

1. Jacob commanded his household to change their garments, to put on fresh clothing, symbolic of pure worship unto Jehovah (**cf. Ex. 19:14**).
2. Christians also need to be sure to dress appropriately when coming together for worship (e.g., **1 Tim. 2:9**).
3. No where in the New Testament are we given specific instructions on what to wear, *yet it can reflect our attitude toward worship*.
4. *More importantly*, we need to place emphasis on our "spiritual clothing" or the spiritual condition of the heart (**1 Pet. 3:3-4**).
5. We are commanded to put on the "new self" in the likeness of God (**Eph. 4:24**); the character and conduct we demonstrate is important!

### III. Let Us Purpose Ourselves to Worship God in a Pleasing Manner!

A. The goal in worship is to please the Lord.

1. We come to the worship assembly not for self-gratification or entertainment, but we come because we desire to worship, please, and glorify God (**Ps. 104:31-35**).
2. To meet the goal of pleasing God in worship will require *preparation* (i.e., putting away all idols; purification of sins; a change of garments).
3. Preparation for worship will require *discipline* for the purpose of *godliness* (**1 Tim. 4:7**) - worship that is centered on God!

B. Preparing for worship now will prepare us for the worship of God in eternity (**Rev. 4:8-11; 5:8-14**).

1. Our *worshipping God together as a church* here on earth is our preparation for our worship of God in Heaven.
2. We will prepare for each worship service and take our worship seriously if we expect to be with God in Heaven to worship Him for all eternity!

**Conclusion: May every Christian Prepare to Worship God Before Each and Every Worship Service. Doesn't God Deserve Our Very Best?**