

INVOLVEMENT IN WORSHIP

In recent years there has been considerable discussion among brethren about getting more people “involved” in worship. No one will question that every Christian must involve himself in worship. I do question, however, what some mean by “involvement.” Some equate involvement with having a leading part of some kind as if the leaders were the only participants. Others have erroneously argued that true involvement is impossible except in a small group situation. Such concepts have led to various attempts to artificially create spirituality and worship “involvement” through responsive readings, serving the Lord’s supper in Bible classes, replacing Gospel sermons with panel discussions, and such like. Some are using the excuse of “involvement” (among others) to advocate giving leading roles to women in our mixed worship assemblies.

My understanding of worship involvement is a bit simpler, and, I think, much more Scriptural and practical. If one sincerely wants to “get involved” in worship, I suggest the following:

- When a brother leads a prayer, we should do our best to shut everything else out. Closing our eyes will help, concentrating with all of our power on the words of the leader (1 Cor. 14:15). This involvement makes it our prayer, also.
- During the singing, we should pay attention to the leader and follow his direction. Even if he is leading the song too fast or too slowly in our opinion, we should not try to take over the song. Think about the words of the song. Sing with understanding, enthusiasm, and joy (1 Cor. 14:15). Of course, we cannot be involved in singing if we do not sing.

- Involvement in the contribution should begin before we get to the assembly. We should purpose and determine in advance what our financial offering will be (2 Cor. 9:7), based upon our level of prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2). We do not fully involve ourselves in giving unless we give regularly (every Lord's day), bountifully, cheerfully, and gratefully.
- We have a plain command of Scripture to be involved in the Lord's supper: "This do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24–25). Moreover, if we fail, we bring judgment upon ourselves (v. 29). Some people close their eyes in quiet meditation as they reflect on the cross. I have for years found it helpful to read and meditate upon one of the Scriptural records of the Lord's suffering and death or upon some other appropriate passage (e.g., Isa. 53; 1 Cor. 11:23–34; et al.).
- As the preacher delivers the sermon, many find it helpful to turn to the Scriptures and read them as they are cited. Those who take notes generally retain far more than those who do not.

These suggestions are surely some of the most basic ways to be "involved" in worship.

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