



Worship Wonderings: Participation

by Pastor Jeff Moore

*O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.*
- Psalm 63:1-4

Human beings are made to worship. God our Father has created us with hearts to worship. The question is never *whether* we worship. The question is always *what* or *who* we worship.

The Psalmist thirsts, faints after, and earnestly seeks the Lord. He aspires to behold and worship the Lord in all his glory. He yearns to be near God, and to be away from God is like thirsting to death in a desert. He must be near God.

That is a heart of worship!

What a privilege we have to come every Sunday into the Presence of our Risen Lord Jesus and magnify his name! We get to come and glorify him as we hear his

Word proclaimed and then to respond in sacrament and prayer and offering.

Some of us come like the Psalmist, ready and yearning to be with God. Some of us come out of habit. It's what we do on Sunday morning. Some of us come frazzled or weary, beaten down by the week. Maybe most of us come with a combination of all three at work in us.

No matter how we come, the important thing is that we engage with our Savior Jesus. Worship is never a spectator sport. Worship is always participatory.

The words from which we derive the word *liturgy* literally means "the work of the people." Worship is the work of the people before our Holy God. God is the only spectator in worship and he is seeking worshipers who will worship him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Therefore, participatory elements of worship are always preferred over presentational elements so that all God's people can take part in worship together.

Participation in worship means at least three things:

1. We make joyful noises. All are welcome to use their gifts to participate in worship. God's people are composed of different ages, abilities and skill levels. We are different people with different gifts