

At-home Bible Study:

What about worship?

For most of 2020, our worship lives have looked different than at any point in 2019. In some ways, worship has looked a little different. In some ways, worship has looked very different. And in some ways, worship hasn't changed at all.

For several months, we were not able to meet together for worship at our church building. Our leadership suspended our public worship gatherings, so there was no option to gather at our building. For some who are in an at-risk health group and judge themselves to be at a great risk for contracting COVID in our worship space, public worship continues to be not an option.

What does God say about it? How does God want our worship in the age of COVID to be a blessing for us?

Today: Should our worship (at home or in a church building) be "traditional?"

The Advent wreath is a popular decoration that traditionally appears in many churches and homes leading up to Christmas. Traditionally, the candles on the Advent wreath are what color?

- a) Four white
- b) Four blue
- c) Four purple
- d) Three purple and one rose-colored

How you answered that question probably depended on your own personal experience. Would it surprise you to know that the oldest tradition of the Advent wreath uses white candles? White eventually became purple for some, and that eventually substituted one rose-colored candle, and now some know blue candles as traditional.

The point is that when we talk "traditions," we must recognize that we often see "traditional" through the lens of our own personal experiences. "Traditional" may mean different things to different people.

Things we do in worship "traditionally" can be good for us. Read  **Hebrews 13:7**. In what way can worship traditions be beneficial for us?

Read  **Matthew 15:1-9**. In what ways can following “traditions” actually be harmful for us and our faith?

The red Christian Worship hymnal we have used in worship for many years beautifully and faithfully holds up the Gospel in word and song for our worship services. But it would be a massive overreach and incredibly (and sinfully) prideful for any one person to declare that in the entire history of the Christian church past, present, and future, the Christian Worship hymnal is the only hymnal we should ever use. Read  **Revelation 5:12 and Philippians 4:8**. What do these verses say about excellent words, liturgies, and songs that have been written since our hymnal was published?

If someone says, “I’m not coming back to worship unless we use the Service of Word and Sacrament liturgy on page 26 in the front of the Christian Worship hymnal,” how would you use God’s Word to respond?

Jesus says in Matthew 6:21 that where your heart is, there your treasure will be also. How we worship—what we speak and sing and do in worship—reveals where our hearts are at.

Read  **1 Corinthians 2:1-2**. Whether we are using the same words Christians have spoken in worship for decades or using new words and melodies written more recently, what should predominate our worship?

What comfort does “Christ crucified” give us when our hearts are not focused properly?

To sum up today’s study:

Why do you think worship traditions are so important in many people’s minds? How would you use God’s Word to respond to concerns about following traditions in worship?