

Life at the Father's House

CORPORATE EXPRESSIONS OF WORSHIP

The Father's House is a church of "people living in the presence and purposes of God." At the heartbeat of our church is a desire to experience God in the midst of a place of true worship. It is in worship, where we come to bless the Lord, that He responds and we in turn respond to Him. We believe it is in this place that people's lives will be changed by the presence and glory of God (2 Cor. 3:18). We, as pastors and leaders of The Father's House, want this to be a place of the continual, manifest presence of the Lord.

In pursuit of God's glory in our church, however, we must be careful to stay within the guidelines given in the Bible and follow them closely. If we stray outside of the parameters that have been given by God in His Word, we risk partaking in fanaticism and soulish practices. For this reason, we will explain the parameters Biblically and objectively as well as how we feel the Lord is leading us to carry out these parameters in The Father's House.

In his writings to the Corinthian church, Paul was used by the Lord to bring instruction into the corporate gatherings of this spiritually vibrant church. The manifest presence of God was so thick in the church's meetings that many people had prophetic words and moved in the other gifts of the Spirit, but it began to get out of control. In response, Paul (by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) wrote:

"Let all things be done for edification...[that] all may be encouraged... For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints... Let all things be done decently and in order."
(1 Cor. 14:26, 31, 33, 40)

We see that Paul outlines three main guidelines that should govern all events of the corporate gathering of the church:

1. All should be done for edification
2. God is a God of peace, not confusion
3. All should be done decently and in order

All should be done for edification

"Let all things be done for edification... [that] all may be encouraged" (1 Cor. 14:26, 31). One of the main reasons the body of Christ gathers together is for the corporate edification and encouragement of the believers. Worship should be a time of edification (building up, strengthening) and encouragement for all who participate. The opposite of these elements is condemnation, discouragement, and tearing down. Who would want to go to a church like that? It is for this reason that we do not allow any condemning words or words of

“judgment” to be given during the corporate gatherings. An exception would be a word of correction given by the pastor or a true prophetic word of judgment that was being presented by an individual operating in the office of a prophet and only with the permission and evaluation of the leadership of the house.

God is a God of Peace

“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). It is obvious, based on the Word of God, that our God is a God of peace, not confusion. Our worship services follow a certain amount of structure based on the revelation and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to the pastors of this church.

At The Father’s House, we recognize that God moves in an atmosphere of peace and not confusion. This is two-fold: When the Lord manifests His presence, it will happen in a peaceful way and will produce peace in the room, not confusion. Secondly, the Lord moves where those seeking Him are in an atmosphere of peace and not confusion.

Peace does not necessarily mean an absence of excitement or intensity. The main characteristic of peace is the absence of confusion. By definition, when something is confused it means, “Being brought to ruin; to make embarrassed; to disturb the mind and purpose and to make indistinct” (Webster’s). Anything that produces those results can immediately be appraised as “out of order.” As those determinations can be subjective, it falls upon the leadership of the church to “make the call” based upon the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

All Should be done Decently and in Order

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). The command is fairly explicit here. This is the “end all” of what happens in our corporate gatherings. Everything should be done “**decently**” and “**in order**.”

Let’s look at these words in the original Greek language in order to interpret this scripture as it was intended.

Decently = *euschemonos* → from *euschemon* meaning decently, honestly

Euschemon = from *eu* and *schema* meaning honorable

Eu = good, well or well done

Schema = external condition; fashion

Order = *taxis* → from *tasso* meaning regular arrangement; order

Tasso = to arrange in an orderly manner

So, we see that in our corporate gatherings, everything should be done decently – in conduct, in fashion – and in order – not disorderly, unruly, etc. One can see how a corporate gathering conducted in this way provides the optimal conditions for edification, encouragement, and peace to abide. **This is how or worship services are to function.**

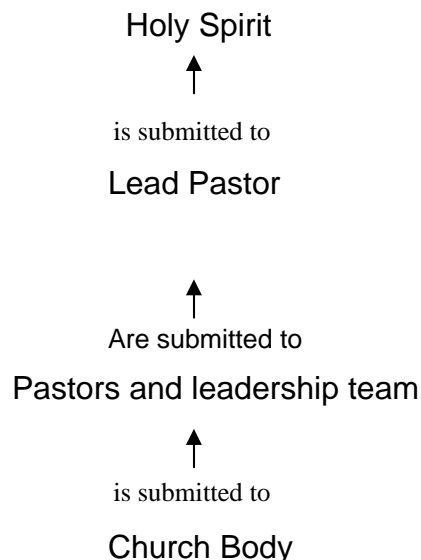
Spiritual Authority

All throughout the Bible, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we see the Lord giving His authority to individuals to oversee the local church. Those individuals are known as pastors. Pastors/overseers are gifts to the body of Christ to make sure that everything is being done decently and in order in the church (among many other responsibilities as well). God will not move apart from human leadership. He instituted the system and He stands by it to this day.

Pastors are responsible for all that happens in the church. They are responsible to God, to the leadership, and to the body. The pastors at The Father's House are submitted to the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that directs, leads, guides, brings correction, and moves our church in one direction or another. However, God will not move apart from human leadership. If the Holy Spirit directs the pastors to go left and the pastors go right, the Holy Spirit will not force them to go left.

At The Father's House, we do our best to follow the Holy Spirit in every situation. However, as the pastors are still human, it is possible to move in a different direction than the Lord's will. Being submitted to the Holy Spirit, the pastors and leaders will make any correction needed if the Holy Spirit shows that we have "missed" Him in any way.

The spiritual authority of The Father's House could be represented in this way:



In addition to this simple illustration, the Lead Pastor is submitted to the leadership team and all of us are submitted to one another (See Eph. 5:21 & Heb. 13:17).

Corporate Expressions of Worship

The following description of the specific Corporate Expressions of Worship for The Father's House is the general guidelines agreed upon by the Lead Pastor

(Dave), Worship Pastor (Joseph), and the other pastors and overseers of our church. The following guidelines have been taken from non-biased interpretation of scripture, a culmination of years of experience in worship ministry, and how we feel the Holy Spirit has led our church to conduct our worship services “decently and in order.”

Minister to the Lord

The goal of every corporate worship time at The Father’s House is to minister to the Lord (and subsequently to each other). We do not come seeking an emotional experience or manifestation, but rather to seek the Lord and minister to Him. We do this through praise and worship.

Although it is impossible to put a formula on worship, we believe the Lord has given us a sequence that we are to follow in order to come into His presence. Psalm 100:4 says “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.” The Bible is very clear that the way we are to come into the presence of the Lord is with thanksgiving and praise. He is enthroned on and inhabits the praise of His people.

Once we come into His presence, the Lord responds to our praise with a revelation of who He is. Second Corinthians 3:18 says that when we behold Him, we are changed from glory to glory. We want our church to see God and be changed into His image. True worship does not take place until we catch a revelation of who He is. Once we see Him, we respond with praise, adoration, or anything else the Holy Spirit leads us to do. However, we know that in this process, He will never lead us into something confusing, disturbing, discouraging, etc. God is a God of peace. Everything should be done decently and in order.

Acceptable Expressions of Worship

Remember, the goals of our services are to minister to God and then to each other. Our focus should be on Him – not the band, the preacher, the lights, the room, or anything (or anyone) else. “You are worthy, oh Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:11). He alone is worthy of our praise and attention.

The goal of the following descriptions of the acceptable expressions of worship at The Father’s House is to ensure that our services are a place of peace, functioning decently and in order, so that the body of Christ can be edified and encouraged. The descriptions and forms that are mentioned are taken directly from scripture and applied with today’s cultural and spiritual conditions in mind.

The following forms of worship can be found by analyzing the activities of David’s Tabernacle, studying the psalms, and looking at other Old Testament practices. Forms mentioned in the Old Testament that are no longer relevant for today’s culture are not taken literally. For example, animal sacrifice is no longer an acceptable form of worship because Jesus became the sacrifice, once and for all, on the cross.

New Testament teaching is relatively silent on the issue of expressions of worship because the forms displayed in David's Tabernacle and prescribed by David were considered universally accepted in the church. We believe that God gave David a divine revelation about praise and worship and how it is to be carried out appropriately in the church. These forms are listed below. For more in-depth study, see the book Worship God! by Ernest Gentile.

1. **Bowing/Kneeling/Laying**

Bowing is the first of three ways we use our bodies in praise and worship. The word in Hebrew is *shâchâh*, which is translated in our Bibles as "worship," and literally means "to bow down."

The seven forms of bowing shown in scripture are:

- Bending both knees
- Bowing the head while standing
- Bowing the upper part of the body in a standing position
- Bending over double in a standing position
- Stooping with one knee bent
- Prostrate (spread eagle)
- Kneeling on both knees with the body prostrated and arms extended on the ground

Bowing shows humility (Rev. 4:10-11), our need for God (Luke 8:41-42), respect (Matt. 2:11), submission (1 Sam. 25:41), adoration (Luke 7:38), and honor (Gen. 43:26).

Guidelines: *Bowing is a powerful form of worship that we, as believers, have to express our hearts to God. However, we must be careful to make sure that our bowing is done decently and in order. Remember, decency literally refers to our fashion and clothing. We must make sure that our bowing is not exposing undergarments or skin that may cause other worshipers to stumble or distract them from focusing on the Lord.*

If the situation arises where a worshiper is exposing a part of his/her body (whether they know it or not) a pastor, leader, or altar worker may speak to the person and ask them to adjust their posture or clothing.

2. **Standing**

Yes, standing is a form of worship (the second using our posture). It is important to note that sitting is not a mentioned posture of worship *anywhere* in the Bible. We see in Psalm 135:2 that the Levites stood as they ministered to the Lord (worshiped).

Standing is an act of reverence, an affirmation of freedom in Christ, a testimony of faith in Christ and in His church, a sign of eagerness and readiness to do His will, an obedient action of faith to the Bible's teaching, and a prophetic declaration of our resurrection through Jesus!

Guidelines: *Standing is appropriate for praise and worship. A possible example of an inappropriate use of standing is when the pastor/worship leader/leader asks the church to be seated and someone stays standing in direct defiance to the leadership. In such a situation, the person may be asked to be seated. This is rare, but it has happened.*

3. **Sitting**

As was previously mentioned, sitting is not listed in the Bible as a bodily expression of worship. Sitting in church, during times of corporate worship, is a religious tradition not a Biblical model. We do understand that some people may get tired of standing for 45 minutes and need to sit down. That is fine and we do not want to “wear people out” physically. So while we are not opposed to people sitting down, if they need to, we will never encourage or have a planned time of sitting during the musical, corporate, participation of worship in the church. Receiving the preaching and teaching of the Word of God is very much a part of our worship service and obviously we want people to sit down (and remain seated) during this portion of the worship service.

Guidelines: *If you get tired of standing, feel free to be seated. There is no condemnation and no pastor or usher will come and tell you to stand back up. We are operating under Biblical principles in these matters, not legalistic rules.*

4. **Dancing**

Dancing is the third and most extreme use of our posture. Psalm 149:3 tells us to praise Him with dancing and singing. David danced before the Lord when he brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem – a symbol of the presence of the Lord. Dancing took two forms in the Bible: **Public rejoicing** and an **act of worship**.

There are many different interpretations of what it means to dance. Acceptable definitions are:

- To move one’s feet, or body, or both, rhythmically accompanied by music.
- To leap, skip, etc.
- To bob up and down

Dancing took several forms in the Old Testament:

- Miriam danced before the Lord (Exodus 15:20)
- The women danced to greet the warriors from battle (1 Sam 18:6)
- David danced when he brought back the ark (2 Sam. 6:14)
- God turns our mourning into dancing (Psalm 30:11)
- We are commanded to praise Him with dancing (Psalm 149:3, 150:4)
- There is a time to dance (Eccl. 3:4)

So, how do we apply these to us, the New Testament church? There are no references in the New Testament to dancing. Because nothing is said in the New Testament against dance, it is implied that it was agreed upon that the Old Testament forms of worship applied to the New Testament church **within**

cultural standards. “There is no Scriptural ground to command people to dance in a certain way.”¹

There are three avenues for dancing to be expressed in the local church.

1. Performance/Production – Christmas plays, pantomime, “specials”
2. Congregational-Participation dance – For example; when the worship leader says, “Let’s all jump for joy and rejoice in God!”
3. Dancing before the Lord (individual expression) – You can dance, if you do it at the right time and within the parameters the leadership has established.

Guidelines: *People that want to perform should dance in a performance or production. That is the appropriate time to dance to be seen and it is the appropriate time for the congregation to watch. **Performance dancing should not be taking place in the midst of worship.** Remember, we are there to worship God and to minister to Him. If worshipers are distracted by dancers that are dancing very elaborately, then the dancer is taking the focus of God’s people off of Him and onto his/herself. Lucifer tried to do this and was cast out of heaven. Obviously this is a heart condition and motivation that only God can ultimately judge, but the Bible shows that He doesn’t like it when people **purposefully** take the focus off of Him and onto themselves.*

As pastors and leaders at The Father’s House, we believe that the dance forms during the “renewal” were God-breathed, but just as God has moved on to something new, so must we. We must be careful to not try to make the forms of dance that were culturally acceptable in the past and apply them today.

Ernest Gentile – pastor, apostle, member of the apostolic leadership team of MFI, and author – provides the following set of guidelines in his book, Worship God! **We have adopted these as our guidelines for dancing at The Father’s House:**

1. Dancing should not be done in a lewd or sensual manner
2. It must be done decently and in order
3. We cannot literally transfer Old Testament forms of dance to our churches today
4. Praise and Worship is not just a channel for a few dancers to show their art
5. The worship of the local church should have a reasonable explanation from Scripture
6. As pastors and leaders, we must ask “Where will this form lead us?” and...
7. “Will this form of worship bring any reproach?” and...

¹ As told by Robert E. Webber. Worship is a Verb. (Waco:Word, 1985): 189. From Worship God! by Ernest Gentile. Bible Temple Publishing. Portland, OR. 1994.

8. "Are those who lead worship properly attired?"
9. Are the dancers appropriately dressed?
10. The form of worship must glorify God and edify His people²

Some specific guidelines for our church are:

- Running around the congregation is not allowed
- Pirouettes and other flamboyant movements that become the visual focus of the attention of the congregation are not allowed
- Any movement/action that is deemed by the pastors or leaders as inappropriate or distracting will be dealt with immediately and graciously

The reason that such specific guidelines must be in place for dance is because dancing is very subjective. This is not to say that what other churches are doing is wrong, but these are the guidelines that are how we feel God wants us to function as a church in this area. Everything must be done decently and in order (this is a subjective area that must be determined by every local pastor and leadership team). Worshipers must be edified and encouraged, and that happens when they behold God in worship. If worshipers (as a whole) are distracted by a few dancers, their focus shifts from God to the dancers.

We understand that not everyone will be in agreement with this view and position on dancing in worship, yet we are doing our best to be responsible for overseeing the house of worship that God has called us to build. This is also why there are other churches in the Body of Christ that encourage flag waving, various forms of dance, banners and other visual expressions of worship.

If the pastors/leaders feel that an individual is in violation of the guidelines of the House, that individual will be spoken to and be asked to make adjustments or cease in his/her form of dance.

5. **Lifting of Hands**

At The Father's House, we believe in the lifting of hands in worship as a public form of worship. In 1 Timothy 2:8, Paul told Timothy, "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing," suggesting that the lifting of hands was common in the New Testament church.

We believe that the lifting of hands is a sign of obedience to God, a willingness to do His will, expresses total dependence on Him, and is a sign of complete surrender to God. One may think of this posture of worship as likened to a child raising their hands to his/her parent – it's like we're saying, "Pick me up, Daddy!" We also lift our hands in thanksgiving and praise to bless the Lord.

Guidelines: *When lifting hands, one must be mindful to not make another worshiper stumble by exposing portions of undergarments or skin that may need to remain concealed. This standard is more of a strict requirement for the worship team, those on stage, or those worshipping down in front. For*

² Worship God! by Ernest Gentile. Bible Temple Publishing. Portland, OR. 1994. 208.

these individuals, the lights and cameras may make a mild exposure of undergarments or skin noticeable to the entire congregation!

Another guideline would be that worshipers must be mindful of their arms while lifting hands. In tight surroundings, it is likely to accidentally bump others with uplifted arms. Although this may be largely impossible to prevent, worshipers with arms extended horizontally are more likely to hit others than worshipers with arms extended vertically.

6. Playing Instruments

The second form of worship expression using our hands is the playing of instruments. It is very clear in the book of Psalms and in descriptions of the Tabernacle of David and Solomon's Temple that instruments were used and were a regular part of the worship experience. "Four thousand praised the LORD with musical instruments, 'which I made,' said David, 'for giving praise'" (1 Chronicles 23:5). We see by this verse that instruments were given for the purpose of praising God. We are commanded to praise God with the instruments in Psalm 150.

1 Chronicles 25:7 says that "the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight." Another important part of playing instruments in the house of the Lord is that it should be done by those who are skillful and anointed to do so. For further examples, see 2 Chronicles 29:25-30 and Psalm 33:2-3. Nowhere in the New Testament does the Bible suggest that the use of instruments in worship demonstrated in the Old Testament should be discontinued or diminished in any way. In fact, in Revelation, we see the use of instruments in heaven!

Guidelines: *An important distinction (as previously mentioned) is that the playing of instruments in the context of the corporate gatherings of The Father's House in the weekend services should be carried out by those on the worship team. This guideline is to make sure that the worship portions of our services are carried out peacefully and in order (Yes, there can be peace in the midst of loud music exuberant praise!). Think about the chaos that would be created if anyone that wanted to could bring and play an instrument in the congregation on a Sunday morning!*

So, in order to guard against what we call, "musical confusion," we do not allow worshipers to bring tambourines or other instruments to service. These instruments being played from the congregation will be a distraction to those in the general vicinity of the worshiper playing it (especially if the he/she is rhythmically or tonally challenged). In the event that a person wants to play an instrument in the congregation, a pastor, leader, or usher will kindly ask that person to refrain from playing during the service.

7. Clapping of Hands

"Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!" (Psalm 47:1). The clapping of hands is the third use of hands in worship spoken of in the Bible. We clap our hands in

worship to show joyous approval of the Lord or what is being said (i.e. like at a political event), to show appreciation (i.e. like at an awards ceremony), and as encouragement. Worshipers can release pent up emotion by clapping (think about crazy football fans – if they can do it for a team, we can do it for the Almighty God!).

Guidelines: *Clapping is good – when it is done at the appropriate time. It would be inappropriate to clap continuously in the midst of a time of waiting on the Lord (for example). We do not want to over scrutinize worship expressions, so the best rule of thumb here is to ask oneself, “Is it appropriate for me to clap right now? Are others clapping? Am I clapping unnecessarily loud or long?” If a pastor, leader, or usher feels that a worshiper is clapping inappropriately, he/she will approach the worshiper and kindly ask him/her to stop.*

8. Speaking

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord” (Psalm 145:21). Speaking is the first use of the voice as an expression of worship and is an important part of our worship services. Worshipers do not have to sing in order to praise God. We have experienced powerful times in God’s presence that came after a prolonged time of simply speaking out the praise of God. Proverbs 18:21 says that “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” What we declare with our mouths is powerful.

We can speak as an expression of worship by vocalizing praise, reading scripture, saying “Amen” (a vow of agreement), making short declarations, etc. This is why, many times, the worship leader or Pastor Dave will have the congregation read a scripture out loud or declare a simple phrase. What we declare is powerful.

Guidelines: *Speaking when it is inappropriate can be very distracting to others, especially during the preaching of the Word or during any other time when an individual is addressing the congregation as a whole. Whispering is tolerable, but can also be distracting if it is frequent and loud.*

9. Singing

David expresses it the best: “I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 104:33). We are commanded to sing in Isaiah 42:10: “Sing a new song to the LORD! Sing his praises from the ends of the earth!” In fact, we are commanded 85 times in the Bible to sing, 75 times in Psalms alone.

When we lift our voices in spontaneous praise, whether in singing or speaking, the Lord is enthroned; meaning that He comes and inhabits the praise of His people. He cannot resist it when His people lift up their voices and sing a song out of their hearts to Him. This is why we sing. It does not matter what kind of vocal ability a worshiper has, because God is looking at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

Guidelines: *If a worshiper is singing in a distracting manner (inappropriately loud, etc.), he/she may be asked by a pastor, leader, or usher to sing slightly quieter. Again, it is not our intention to over scrutinize this area. Each worshiper must be responsible to determine whether or not his/her singing is distracting or inappropriate for the situation.*

10. Shouting

Shouting is the third and most extreme use of the voice in worship. We see in Leviticus 9:24 that the people “shouted for joy” and fell facedown in the presence of the Lord. David tells us, in Psalm 47:1, to “Shout to God with the voice of triumph and songs of joy!”

Shouting is a great release of emotion and energy. “God releases His presence among worshipers as their emotions focus on Him and His Kingdom.”³

Revelation 5:12 shows us that even in heaven, the elders, four living creatures, and angels cry out unto God with a loud voice. Shouting is a powerful tool of the worshiper.

Guidelines: *There is a time to shout and a time not to shout. Many times, the worship leaders will encourage the congregation to lift a shout because there is power when a corporate shout is lifted unto God. Sometimes, worshipers will feel like shouting in the midst of a time of praise and worship. We encourage individual expression with the guideline that it is not done at an inappropriate time (again, like in a time of waiting on the Lord or another quiet time of the service, for example). If a worshiper is inappropriately lifting a shout, he/she may be asked to abstain until a better, more appropriate time in the service.*

The Responsibility of the Worshiper

It is our heart, as pastors and leaders, that our congregation would experience the fullness of the presence of God in our services. We are living to see the glory of the Lord come and invade our services like it did at the dedication of Solomon's temple. In pursuit of His glory, we want our congregation to worship with understanding in knowing why they are doing what they are doing in worship.

It is not our desire to place a huge list of rules and regulations on our congregation in the context of worship. We want people to be free to worship the Lord in the way they feel led. We want people that have never moved their foot in worship to begin to dance before the Lord. We want people to lift up a shout of praise to Him, because He is worthy. We encourage people to lift their voices and sing a spontaneous song to the Lord from their hearts. It is in this atmosphere of praise and worship that the Lord is enthroned.

³ Worship God! by Ernest Gentile. Bible Temple Publishing. Portland, OR. 1994. 160.

However, it is possible for some people's "freedom" to become someone else's distraction and stumbling block. Remember, the whole reason we gather together in worship is to minister to God and to glorify Him. As we worship, the worshiper should ask himself/herself a few basic questions in order to evaluate their worship expressions:

- "Am I causing the atmosphere of peace and order to be compromised?"
- "Am I causing other worshipers to focus on me and becoming the center of attention, rather than the Lord?"
- "Am I intentionally bringing and giving the Glory to God and not myself?"
- "Do I have a humble spirit and an attitude of submission to the leadership of The Father's House?"

Finally, as we submit to spiritual authority, the Lord will bless us. As the church submits to the pastors, the church will be blessed. Even if individuals do not understand why the pastors/leaders are saying or doing what they are, there is a blessing that comes when these individuals take the road of submission and not rebellion or defiance. Likewise, as the pastors submit to the Holy Spirit, there is a blessing that comes on them and subsequently, the church. Even if the pastors and leaders do not understand why the Holy Spirit is saying or doing what He is, when they submit to Him and trust in His leadership (rather than rebelling or defying Him), there is a blessing that comes.

So let's worship God in freedom, but staying in the guidelines of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. He will lead us in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:24). Let's glorify His name and see His glory come to our lives, church, and city like we have never seen it before!

In Pursuit of Him,



Joseph Zwanziger
Worship Pastor



Dave Patterson
Lead Pastor