

There is a survey on US adults about church attendance: ranking on A very important reason one attends a church. Some of the survey finding: 69% select “so children will have moral foundation”, 66% “for comfort in times of trouble/sorrow”, 31% “I feel a religious obligation to go”, 19% “to meet new people/socialize”, and 16% “to please my family, spouse or partner.” The result is somewhat expected for me. For example, before I became a Christian, one of my purpose of going to church at that time was to meet new people/socialize. However, we have to change the attendees’ mind-set. The number one priority shall be to worship God. I listed the elements in worship on my Psalm 66 summary. Today we focus on **the attitude of worship** (found in Psalm 95).

There are two categories of words for worship in both Hebrew and Greek. The first one (לְקַגֹּד in Hebrew) is about body language such as bow down and kneel down to show reverence and submission. The second one is about doing something for God like give offering and serving that show sacrifice and obedience. The second category (לְעִבּוֹד in Hebrew) is often used to define worship today as service (e.g. Sunday Service). Romans 12:1 is about the attitude of worship defined in the 2nd category. Today we concentrate on the first category. What we do reflect our heart (Proverbs 27:19). Thus, our body language during worship reflects our heart (our attitude).

1. Praiseful and thankful attitude

Verses 1 to 5 are about the attitude of praiseful and thankful. Verse 1 described praising God with joy. Praiseful attitude with joy is essential. Verse 3 described some of God’s attribute for praise. He is the great God, the great King above all gods. Verses 4 and 5 add onto that. His supreme power and great ruling are well worth our praise.

Thankful is another important attitude. His almighty power and wisdom created the world and the universe for us to live and enjoy. (Psalm 95:4-5, Gen. 1:1-27). Often the same act of God, like those listed in verses 3 to 5, can both be our praise and our gratitude.

2. A heart of humbleness and reverence

Verses 6 states “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker”. This Hebrew word of worship is the gesture of bow down and prostrate. Bow down and kneel down reflects our humbleness and reverence to God. Pride is a sin that can not be tolerated by God such as Satan’s pride. Verse 7 further points to the fact that we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care. We are humbled not just because of His Lordship and our Maker; He is also our care giver and protector that make us humbled because of His great love and deed.

Whenever we have pride and think we can do things by our own strength, we fail in God’s perspective and will be humbled. James 4:10 states “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” This is a truth and a promise.

A church I often attend in the LA area has a very modern worship style. However, the teaching and attitude during worship is very Biblical. During specific prayer time in worship, all members are to bow their heads and kneel down. It is important to have our hearts and body language in sync during worship.

3. Don’t harden your heart

Verses 8 to 11 of this Psalm warn about harden your heart and not obey God. In general, warning against harden your heart refers to non-Christians where they are not accepting God even the Good News have been presented to them. Here refers to the Israelites in the desert for 40 years. These Israelites are supposedly God’s people. Harden their hearts here described those Israelites had no faith. They are looking for earthly comfort. They have no faith that God’s provision is the best and did not obey God’s leading. Beyond no faith, they had no appreciation. If they were not seeing manna from Heaven and guidance in the desert as blessing, they would not see milk and honey as blessing in the promise land also. Thus, the “rest” in verse 11 refers to they would not get to the promise land. In the spiritual sense, they can not get God’s peace and rest. This 3rd key point (harden your heart) actually ties to key points 1 and 2 above as opposing attitudes. The Israelites did not appreciate God’s provision means they did not have a praiseful and thankful heart. They didn’t obey God’s leading is the opposite of point 2 that

is humbleness and reverence. Similarly, people today are looking for wealth and earthly enjoyment as their goal of life, they cannot enter God's rest (peace and spiritual blessing) because their hearts stay in the world. That is God's warning.

In the New Testament, at the end of Hebrews chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4 has cited Psalm 95 and expanded. Today, people can enter God's eternal rest but we can't if we harden our hearts (don't believe and no faith). In fact, God is in us and our body is His temple (I Cor. 6:19) and thus worship with our pure heart and bodies is a must. We need to believe, having a holy heart plus having attitudes of points 1 and 2 above in order to truly worship God. Worship him while we are on earth. Therefore, forget about the survey and the others' attitude, you just worship with the right attitudes.