

Explanation & Commentary on CFBC's Order of Worship

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

INTRODUCTION:

At Christ Fellowship Bible Church [CFBC] we deliberately format the worship service so that all that takes place serves to exalt God, engage the mind, point to Jesus Christ, and edify the saints with the gospel of God's sovereign grace. All that happens serves to enhance the revelation of God from His Word and then the believers' response in worship.

EXPLANATION:

Though not every corporate worship gathering follows the exact same format, the following elements are included in the worship time. We spend time in prayer as we thoughtfully put this together so as to exalt God and edify His people.

▶ **Announcements** — *This is placed at the beginning so the people can immediately hear what's going on this upcoming week and if there are any practical needs that they need to be aware of. People need to arrive on time to hear the announcements. We have found this to be best at the beginning when we can especially greet visitors as well.*

▶ **Public Scripture Reading + Pastoral Prayer** — *In obedience to 1 Timothy 4:13 we give attention to the public reading of Scripture. Often it supplements the text that will be preached. Other times it comes from a psalm and functions as a call to worship. Still other times we work through books of the Bible and read section by section each week. The pastoral prayer is the time when the man who reads the Word intercedes on behalf of the flock to God and prays the Word back to God. He models a God-exalting, Trinitarian, gospel-centered prayer. He confesses sin. He reminds the congregation of God's love and forgiveness in Christ. He prays interceding on behalf of the flock in bringing everyone before the Throne of Grace at the outset of corporate worship.*

▶ **Songs** — *We carefully and intentionally pick songs that thread together around a common theme. That theme could be the sermon's main point, the gospel, the Trinitarian God, heaven, grace, repentance, holiness, or something of the like. We include both hymns and worship songs. We carefully look at the content of each song so that the words and the theology is lofty, biblical, mind-engaging, and accurate because we know that songs 'teach' and we want our people to be engaged with a majestic God.*

▶ **Prayer before the Sermon** — *One of the elders leads the congregation in a time of silent prayer before the message begins and then he himself prays for the unction of the Spirit and the power of God to go forth with the heralding of His Word.*

▶ **Sermon** — *The messages are expository as they all are sourced in the Word of God, derive the meaning of the text and make that the main point of the sermon. The sermon provides the meaning of the text, proves it with cross-references, instructs the mind with sound theology, and engages the heart and will with specific, clear, powerful application points. The sermon has as its goal to glorify Christ in the declaring of His Word so that the lost would repent and the saved would be changed as the Spirit works the Word deep into their souls so that they are formed more into the likeness of Christ. The expositions predominantly work verse-by-verse through books of the Bible and last for at least an hour.*

▶ **Songs** — *Often we respond to the preached Word with music. Worship is defined as a response to God's revelation with all that we are. So when we hear from God (=preaching) we are to respond to Him in adoration or consecration (=song). If there is a hymn that has been written to that particular text/theme, it may be appropriate to sing it as a song of response to re-engage the heart and re-commit the heart to obedience.*

▶ **Prayer after the Sermon** — *After the preaching has happened, an elder leads the congregation in a time of silent application of the sermon and then he concludes with a prayer reminding the people of the duty to be hearers and doers of the Word. True blessing comes to those who read, hear, and obey the Word of God. This concludes the worship time so that all people have had time to consider the preached Word and so that they can leave with specific points to implement in their lives.*

OTHER ELEMENTS OFTEN INCLUDED:

It is not every week that these important elements are included in the times of worship, but we want to speak to the following important elements of worship. We believe that the two ordinances that Christ gave to His church (baptism and communion) are vitally important and we take them very seriously at CFBC. They are reserved exclusively for true believers.

- ▶ **Baptism** — *At CFBC, we believe that baptism is only for believers who have made a profession of faith in Christ and want to obediently speak of God's working in their lives and how they've been buried with Christ and have been raised to new life in Christ. We baptize by immersion and happily lead those interested in a baptism class and we baptize during a corporate worship service and allow each person to share the testimony as to how God saved them. What a picture of the gospel this is!*
- ▶ **Lord's Supper** — *We see the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as vitally important to CFBC. We have taken communion twice a month and at other seasons of the church we have partaken one time a month. The Lord's Supper is that fellowship meal reserved exclusively for believers to remember the body (life) and blood (death) of Christ who died in the place of His elect. It is a supper where believers fellowship together with the risen and interceding Christ as the gospel is proclaimed to the others who may be present that this is a sharing meal with Christ, with believers, and by it believers are strengthened and edified in this essential ordinance that Christ gave to His church. We spend a considerable amount of time fencing the table by explaining the meaning of the supper and warning those of partaking in an unworthy manner. We instruct nonbelievers not to partake of this meal as they would be eating and drinking divine judgment upon themselves in so doing but at the same time we invite the lost to repent of their sin, trust in Christ, and embrace the Savior freely and savingly!*
- ▶ **Testimonies** — *From time to time we love hearing testimonies of people in the flock as to how God has saved them and also how we can come alongside of and pray for those in our local church.*
- ▶ **Missionary Updates/Letters/Video** — *With some regularity, we mention missionaries who serve locally and globally and explain to the congregation what is going on in that particular ministry and some needs that they have. It is a delight to share with the flock how God is working cross-culturally through the glorious gospel and through the preaching of the Word for His glory. Our people love hearing about missionaries and praying together for them on Sundays and in the mid-week prayer meetings.*
- ▶ **Corporate Prayers for Revival** — *From time to time we will invite the entire congregation to come to the front and we will kneel together in corporate prayer and beseech God. We have done so and pleaded with God to abolish abortion and to have mercy on our ministry at the abortion mills. We have earnestly called on God and begged for revival in our nation. We have pleaded with God before large evangelistic outings (Gay/Pride, Mardi Gras, 4th of July, etc.). We count it a joy to kneel together, humbly, boldly, corporately, and believingly as we pray to God and ask Him to hear and answer our prayers as a local church.*
- ▶ **Open Sharing/Testimonies** — *Periodically an elder will come forward and lead the congregation in a time of open-sharing. This is carefully led so that the congregation is aware of what to share. Often there a number of opening statements that prompt the discussion time so that folks can share how God is working in their lives, people that they're evangelizing that the flock can be praying for, what people are learning in Scripture, and how we can be praying for one another. These have been very fruitful and encouraging times when we have done them at CFBC.*

CONCLUSION:

In all that we do, we want the Word of God to drive our worship so that God is the dominating focus, Christ is the exalted theme, and the Word of God is constantly engaging our minds and hearts throughout. We want the gospel of Jesus Christ to permeate the entire time so that the lost who may be present are confronted repeatedly with the saving gospel of redemption and so that the believers may be built up and strengthened by these magnificent truths. We want believers to be edified and the lost to hear the gospel so that the Spirit can work in their souls and regenerate them. We never cater to the lost or water down the message or seek to make it a comfortable environment for the nonbeliever. We seek preeminently to exalt Christ and proclaim the gospel of salvation in all that we do. Herein lies the power of the gospel, the power of the church, and the effectiveness in edifying the converted and in saving the lost. May God use the otherworldly, transcendent, biblical, God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-empowered worship of CFBC for His glory! We worship Him in spirit and in truth. To Him be the glory!