

The Philosophy of the Public Reading of Scripture

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Each Sunday we gather for corporate worship, the church family stands together and a man leads in a time of the public reading of Scripture followed by a prayer. This allows us to hear from God and to follow in the Scriptural pattern of gathering corporately and reading the Word (at length) so that the people of God hear from God's Word in the assembly. ***In what follows, we present 12 statements related to the public reading of Scripture in the CFBC worship gatherings.***

1. The public reading of Scripture occurs each time we gather for corporate worship as hearing from God through His Word is primary. It reminds us that we gather to hear from *God* and not from mere *men*.
2. The public reading of Scripture is done by a man who has been informed ahead of time so he can practice reading slowly, clearly, and articulately.
3. The public reading of Scripture must be done with an attitude of reverence, honor, and sobriety because when we read God's Word we are hearing God Himself speak to us. Thus, we must treat God with honor and reverence.
4. The portion of the public reading of Scripture often corresponds with the text that will be preached (sometimes it comes from the Old Testament if the sermon will be in the New Testament). Or, there are times where we are reading through a book of the Bible and we will read a chapter each week (e.g., Acts or one of the Epistles).
5. The public reading of Scripture must be done with care, with precision, with preparation, with articulation, with affection as coming from a man who believes confidently in what he is reading. To state it simply, a man who reads the Word must believe what he reads in the text and read it with passion and interest.
6. The public reading of Scripture is followed by a prayer that responds to the revelation of God in His Word. Often this can take the form of adoration and worship, confession and repentance, affirmation and petition, supplication and intercession, desperation and resolutions. The man can take some phrases and theological concepts that came out in that text that he just read and pray through those points to enhance his prayer, to teach the flock how to pray, and to model how to pray the Scriptures.
7. The public reading of Scripture is an occasion of utmost reverence and honor since the Lord of the universe is speaking through His sufficient and inspired Word. So we choose to honor our Lord and honor His Word by all standing together during the time of the reading of the text and the prayer that follows.
8. The public reading of Scripture follows the pattern of Old Testament Israel when they gathered together and Moses or Ezra or Nehemiah (or others) gathered the entire congregation (men, women, and children) and read from the Law of God in the presence of everyone. Just as God's Word was read publicly and corporately before, so we want to continue to do it now.
9. The public reading of Scripture allows people to be reminded every week that *the* authority for the local church is Christ Himself as He has revealed Himself sufficiently and clearly in the written Word. So as we read the Word, it reminds us that we all submit to Him and bow to His Word as our sole authority.

10. The public reading of Scripture provides an occasion for God to address His people through His Word and He wisely and providentially brings Scriptures to people's lives in very timely moments for comfort, for reproof, for instruction, and for guidance.
11. The public reading of Scripture teaches the children the absolute importance of the primacy of the Word of God. The next generation sees everyone standing, holding their open Bibles, and following along as the Word of God is read. This reinforces our confidence in the Word that we have as we seek to model for our children the supremacy of the Word in all things and for all of life -- even from the youngest of ages.
12. The public reading of Scripture also models by example the importance of reading the Bible out loud, together with others, and the many benefits that come from it. It instructs fathers of the importance of gathering the family together and reading the Word out loud, together, with reverence, and with precision.