Worship Notes

...making our worship more meaningful & understandable

Is the same form in worship week after week dead ritualism? Careful observers of worship will notice that we basically have the same structure (the same “liturgy”) in our worship from week to week, even though the elements within that structure often change. Is that dead ritualism, or tradition for tradition’s sake? Not necessarily. Christian sociologist and philosopher James K.A. Smith notes this tension in our heritage in his book *Imagining the Kingdom*: “We, especially we Protestants, have a built-in allergy to repetition in worship, though we are quite happy to affirm the value of repetition in almost every other sphere of life, from study to music to sports to art. We affirm the value of ritual repetition if we’re learning piano scales or learning to hit a golf ball but are curiously suspicious of repetitive ritual in worship and discipleship” (pg. 181).

In other words, while it’s good to seek after new ways to experience our God, our worship, like most other aspects of our lives, is habit-forming, and it can only be habit-forming by repetition of the same practices week after week. By engaging in such habit formation, we consistently are shaped towards a love for God and his mission by the consistent engagement of the same practices such as confession, assurance of pardon, offering, thanksgiving, sermon, and going forth in mission, etc.

GATHERING

Call to Worship  *God gathers us into community*

Songs of Praise & Adoration  *We join our voices with the heavenly choir*

RESPONDING

Confession & Assurance  *We admit our brokenness & receive God’s forgiveness*

Offering  *We give ourselves to God in response to His goodness*

Prayer  *Our Father loves to hear us, His children, talk with Him*

Mission  *We share how God is at work in our neighborhood & the world*
  2nd Sun/month

Baptism  *We join ourselves to Christ in His death & resurrection*
  3rd Sun/month

RECEIVING

Scripture & Sermon  *The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us today through His Word*

Communion  *God invites us to feast with Him at His table*
  1st Sun/month

SENDING

Commissioning  *We send our members out to serve in their places of work*
  Select 4th Sundays/month

Benediction  *God blesses us to go out to our community in joyful service*
WHAT IS LITURGY?

What is a liturgy, and why do we have it? Why is it so central to the church’s life? Why, in short, is knowing something about the liturgy so central to understanding the church itself?

In its origins, the Greek word leitourgia meant “people’s work,” better translated as something like “public service” or “public duty.”

Generally, it means following a set form of words, actions and rituals, as opposed to a free-form, open-ended kind of worship. This does not mean that non-liturgical churches are totally disorganized – they often plan their services according to familiar patterns and models.

WHAT DO WE DO IN OUR LITURGY?

Liturgical actions depend wholly on the cycles of the church year. Participating in liturgy means we share in this cycle, we join its beginnings and share the route to its end. Much of this journey involves non-literate means, including colors and lights.

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Liturgy consecrates time – or else, time consecrates liturgy
Liturgical actions depend wholly on the cycles of the church year. Participating in liturgy means

Liturgy creates community with past and present, proclaiming a link with past and future.
(excerpted from “The Liturgy and The Church” by Philip Jenkins)