

## REVERENCE

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Here is a word which is not popular among many Christians today and yet it is a Biblical word and while we can quote many references, one most obvious reference is Psalm 89. 7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him. The assembly of saints refers to a church or any place of worship or anywhere where worship is made.

Reverence is an attitude of deep respect tinged with awe and veneration and shown in its outward manifestation. Veneration is that feeling of awe and respect and includes honour. It also means deference which is respectful submission. All of these obvious attributes are largely forgotten today as being insignificant and of little or no value.

Worship must be reverent as indicated in such verses as Psalm 111.9 which reads, He sent redemption unto His people and hath commanded His covenant for ever; holy and reverend is His name. When it says that God is to be feared, as in Psalm 130.4, this means respect and honour of the One who is worthy.

Worship is worship. Worship is to reverential, quiet and personal and not like a loud party. We must please God in our worship and in everything we do.

It is noted that in Psalm 81. 1 we have the words Shout to the God of Jacob. Shout in the Hebrew Bible is the word Ruwa, and almost always is used in a military sense and in this psalm the future restoration of Israel is the theme not an event of worship. Ruwa means a war cry, a signal to war or to march, a triumph over enemies, applause, a religious or national impulse, to cry out in distress, noise, or alarm. It cannot mean worship since Psalm 96.9 reads O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear (respect and honour) before Him, all the earth. There is absolutely no suggestion of shouting in the Bible as a part of worship. And God is not deaf. He was not heard in the earthquake or in the fire but in a still small voice. (1 Kings 18.12).

Ernest Lloyd (1913 -2010) was a fine Hebrew Christian and persecuted for being Jewish as so many are. He travelled from Carlisle in north west UK to South Africa to speak at a meeting. He arrived and there was about an hour of singing choruses and worship songs over and over again and it was very loud. Ernest did not speak and lost money on this trip. The police were called in response to many complaints, closed the meeting and some arrests were made.

God is not worshipped with men's hands (Acts 17.25) and worship comes from the heart. Today in churches we have entertainment which can be seductive, misleading and loud. God is not deaf.

Of course, there will be many who will object to all that is said here and talk about the joy of the Lord and how it is expressed with excitement and natural emotion. We have the usual comment that we have to move with the times and the only way to get young people and others in to worship is to be up to date. I can see this argument and I have visited many churches recently to find only small congregations of old people.

But does that mean we have to go against what is clearly taught in the Bible?

Worship is better expressed as quiet time when God Himself speaks in an intimate way as if heart to heart, to an individual or a whole company, and this is what builds a relationship with God and remember fellowship concerns our relationship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus and not chatting and drinking coffee. Worship is not a variety show or the use of worldly methods. We are told not to love the world (1 John 2.15) or use worldly methods. Is going to church in scruffy attire

honouring God? There is an attitude in some churches that any old thing will do for God and I have often heard it said that God makes Himself know to us in our trendy worship songs and our dancing! God deserves much better than this! He is the God of holiness.

Why are we to be holy? It is because God is holy and we are to be like Him. (1 Peter 1 16) We are to please Him. Holiness encapsulates reverence.

The Scripture tell us to be still in the presence of the Lord (Psalm 46. 10). In 1 Corinthians 14.23 Paul warns against demonstrations, speaking in tongues and anything 'over the top' since many will think this is madness. We are exhorted to have self-control which is often expressed as temperance (Acts 24. 25 etc.)

Worship is not expressing ourselves or doing our own thing. It is following the clear instructions of Scripture. But many people do not consider or respect this.

People need to be educated in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2.15)

One is disappointed to see on church notices boards, After the service please join us in fellowship of a cup of coffee and chat. That is not fellowship since fellowship has nothing to do with chatter and drinking coffee and, if there has been a good message given in the service, it could be completely washed away by the coffee. I know many examples of this.

Isaiah 30. 15 is an important verse. It states, In quietness and confidence is your strength and God adds yet ye would not have it. What utter folly to reject what God says.

1 Thessalonians 4.11 tells us to live a quiet life and the whole chapter deals with our spiritual life right up to the rapture. Study to be quiet is a New Testament ideal and, again, what utter folly it is to reject it.

In worship today we have many aspects which may not be reverent. There is noise, exuberant girls, dancing in see through dress which fascinates the men. I have heard the Lord referred to as Jesus my mate or a good bloke. I have heard worship songs which put words into Gods mouth which He has not said such as

I am building a people of power that will move through this land by My spirit

Modern worship is often ecumenical by which Biblical doctrine seems to not be upheld. In my article Songs of Fellowship some example are given .

If the Lord came back to earth now and stayed for a while would He be a drummer or guitarist in a Christian Rock Band?

Would He sing words wrongly attributed to Him?

Would He approve of homosexuality which is condemned in the Bible?

Would He cancel the ten commandments?

Would He expect honour, holiness and respect from all believers and due reverence to His Name? If the answers are obvious, which they are, then why are these matters not carried out today in modern worship?

In entering God's presence it is to be with humbleness and holiness WE stand before god by no work of our own. We are not to impress the Lord with our gifts and abilities Psalm 93 5 exhorts holiness in the House of the lord forever. The principle of worship is godly reverence. Worship is to be directed towards the lord not the congregation rock band singers dancers and preacher.

Modern worship has many innovations and corruptions and there are always the quest for new ideas I heard a preacher say that at 55 he was now potty trained. I have heard it said many many times that unless you speak in tongues you are not saved. One song tells us to lift Jesus higher . He already has the highest place in heaven.

While there are advocates for modern worship and innovations there are many others who have deep concerns about it and the way modern worship is going farther and farther away from reverence and holiness.

2 Timothy 4. 3 ff speaks of the time when people will not want sound doctrine. Instead they will want their own desires and accept teachers who will say what they want to hear.

Modern worship is often just that as mentioned above and is on the television daily and often presented as entertainment, not sound doctrine. Entertainment, not learning about the Lord . And much of this entertainment worship is of Pentecostal and charismatic groups where anything goes.

Albert Leckie (1920 -1988) in Assembly Testimony issue 386 writes about the behaviour God expects in worship, its prayerfulness, quietness (1 Timothy 2 verse 2), peaceableness. godliness and seriousness. This is what God wants but does not get in modern worship.

People will refer to Psalm 100, Make a joyful noise unto the Lord to justify their type of worship but this refers to a future day when everyone will know that Jesus Christ is Lord as in Philippians 2.10 That at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven on the earth and under the earth and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

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