

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 3/6/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, March 7 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those who don't have a church home but who think about church each week. Ask GOD to send the HOLY SPIRIT upon these people that they might find the courage to venture into an unknown place to worship GOD. Pray that there be people of faith who commit themselves to extending GOD'S invitation to "come and see" to those who are lacking a meaningful relationship with GOD.*

Some reflections and ponderings on worship:

- When did we decide that worship had to be finished in one hour? Did we somehow determine that we have this obligation to spend time with GOD each week, but one hour is enough and we need not do more than that? Is time so important that we're actually worshipping that instead of GOD?
- We sit through movies and shows and concerts that are much longer than an hour. Does worship need to be more entertaining to hold peoples' interest for longer than sixty minutes?
- There are folks who also attend Bible study or other Bible classes along with worship. Maybe they like learning about GOD more than the other parts of worship. We could lengthen the sermon so there is more learning time, but that would make the service longer unless we cut out other parts. And what would we cut out? Prayer? Communion? Praising GOD with music? Sharing the Peace? The reading of GOD'S Word?
- The first church I served was a rural congregation that began worship at 10:30am. The closest restaurant was 12 minutes away and if you didn't finish by 11:30, you couldn't get to that restaurant in time for the brunch special. The church I served in Denver had to be done by noon so that people could get home in time for the Broncos game during football season. (Broncos football was so important that a couple who had season tickets and who were getting divorce both offered to give their spouse custody of their children in exchange for the Broncos season tickets.) Churches that have multiple services have to get done in time for people to leave and others to come in for the next service.
- In some places, people plan to worship all day and even bring lunches for the midday break, and everyone eats together. They worship for six-to-eight hours on Sunday.
- The Bible invites us to give a tithe, or ten percent to GOD. A week consists of 168 hours. If you subtract 68 hours for sleeping (and that's almost ten hours a night), that leaves 100 hours. A tithe of that would be ten hours each week given to GOD.
- Worship is where we learn important parts of faith life like the LORD'S Prayer and what we believe through the Apostles' Creed. We include them in worship so that everyone has those foundational pieces that help anchor us in faith. Churches include these to help parents fulfill the promises made at their child's baptism to "bring them to the services of GOD'S house" and to "teach them the LORD'S Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments." If families don't come to church, will the children learn these things?
- Worship is a verb, but we've turned it into a noun. We've made worship the event rather than the thing we do at the event. We come to the church service to worship GOD, but I wonder if many think of worship as the thing you go to rather than the thing you do when you get there.

Just some musings as I thought about worship today.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey