

Updated June 1, 2013

CBC Philosophy of Worship

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness. – Psalm 29:2

The purpose of the CBC Philosophy of Worship is to establish the basis for our expression of worship within our church. If we are biblically on target with our theological description of worship and the prescription of its function within our church, our expression of worship will appropriately honor and glorify God.

Vision:

The purpose of the worship ministry at CBC is to lead the people of this church into a lifestyle of worship.

Our mission is to see people worship the Lord, not only on Sundays, but also throughout the life that they lead the rest of the week. We strive to minister to the Lord through biblically prescribed means and methods of worship, and to create an atmosphere in every worship service that draws people into the presence of the Lord, and allows Him to minister to their needs through His presence in their lives.

Our focus is on music that is biblically rich, theologically true, and doctrinally sound... our greatest concern is that any artist who steps on our platform is there not to perform for the church, but to minister to the Lord in worship; the far lesser concern of ours is the particular style of the musicians.

Our goal specifically within the weekend service is to minister to God in song, and be the most excellent doorkeepers in the house of the Lord as possible, ushering people into God's presence so He can do spiritual business with them.

We recognize that songs teach theology as much as sermons do, so we're extremely careful about the choice of songs shared from the platform. We are not overly concerned about the style with which they're presented, except that it is to be a musical language that is spoken by the culture of our church body; but we are very careful about the substance of the songs themselves and the lives of the ones tasked with leading them.

Our goals are more intentional toward the purity of worship rather than artistry of music.

The worship at Community Bible Church is to be experiential, historic, passionate, Bible-driven and God-exalting with a Christ-centered approach as our core focus (Rev 19:10, I Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 95:6-7, Psalm 100:2, Matthew 4:10).

True worship should be in accordance with God's commands.
(Ge 22:2; Ge 12:1,7-8; Dt 30:16-20; 1Sa 15:22; Ps 40:6-8; Jer 7:2; Da 3:28; Ac 13:2; Ro 12:1)

True worship should give God the honor due to him.
(1Ch 16:29; Ps 96:8-9)

True worship should be orderly and reverent.
(1Co 14:40, 1Ch 16:37-42; 1Ki 18:30-39; 1Co 14:26)

True worship embraces all of life as an act of worship.
(Colossians 3:17, 23; 1 Cor 10:31)

True worship involves the whole of a person's life and not just formal acts of worship. (Romans 12:1-2, I Corinthians 6:19,).

True Worship should not be mechanical. (Jn 4:23-24; Heb 10:1)

True worship enthusiastically embraces the coming together of the Body of Christ in united expressions of worship (Hebrews 10:24-25; Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 149:1).

True worship is costly. (2 Sam 24:24; Mk 12:41-44; Ro 12:1)

True worship involves the worshipper's heart, soul and mind. (Deut 6:5, Matt 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27)

True worship is in the spirit. (Jn 4:23-24; Isa 29:23; Php 3:3; 1Ti 2:9; Heb 12:28)

True worship should be grounded in godly and obedient living.
(Mic 6:6-8; Ro 12:1; Ps 15:1-5; Ps 24:3-4; 1Ti 2:10)

True worship involves invested preparation for worship. (1Co 11:28; Lev 16:3-4; 2Sa 12:20; 2Ch 7:1; Mt 2:11)

True worship requires wholeheartedness. (Dt 6:5; Ex 34:14; Dt 10:12; Jos 22:5; 1Sa 12:24; Ps 27:4; Mt 22:37 pp Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27)

True worship displays confidence in approaching God. (Heb 10:22-23; Ge 4:4; Jas 4:8; Heb 7:19; Heb 11:4)

We believe this to be the essence of biblical worship: *That all of life would be lived with a worship quality before our audience of One for His glory* (Colossians 3:17, 23, 1 Corinthians 10:31).

Scripture Regulates Worship:

There is an inseparable bond between the centrality of the Word of God and the worship of God. To this end, we believe: scripture is the heart of our corporate worship. Paul told Timothy, “Devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift...” (1 Timothy 4:13,14a). Thus Timothy’s priority was the proclamation of God’s Word to God’s people in the public setting of corporate worship. The content of God’s Word will be woven through whatever we do and will be our source for all authority.

God’s Word is wholly sufficient in that it provides all elements which are essential to the corporate worship of CBC: reading of scripture, preaching and teaching, prayer, singing and the two ordinances of the local church – baptism and communion. All of these are to be done decently and in order so that God is glorified and the body of Christ is edified (1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Corinthians 14:40, 1 Thessalonians 5:11). Acts of worship are proper only insofar as they are in accord with the Word of God.

Worship: Three Strands

To simplify, an *Upward*, *Inward*, and *Outward* reverence is a proper expression of worship as evidenced by scripture:

***Upward*--The upward segment of our philosophy of worship is the glorifying of God through intentional praise and worshipful music, which assists in the preparation for the serious study of His Word** (Psalm 119:7). The first two of the Ten Commandments establish God as the obvious object of our worship and devotion (Exodus 20:3-4). This means that the “audience of One” in worship is God and not the congregation. True worship never casts the congregation in the role of spectators but active participants.

***Inward*--The impact of worship is captured in the “inward” component of our philosophy in that our worship experience at CBC, in the corporate gathering, prepares us for intimate fellowship with Jesus during the remainder of the week.** As such, our services provide a worship perspective that is primarily transcendent in nature, rather than superficial and man-centered. “Sanctify the Lord in your heart” was Peter’s admonition in 1 Peter 3:15. Jesus is to be our treasure for “where our treasure is there our heart is also” (Luke 12:34). Worship is to evoke and express a deep love for God.

Outward--The outward component of the worship experience at CBC provides the foundation for those involved to bring a worshipful attitude into all other activities in their everyday lives. Following God is ingrained in our lives and ought to be the logical result of each component of the CBC philosophy of worship whether we are obeying the Great Commission or living a worshipful life, of which the main goal is doxological (to glorify God). The aim is to experience God in such a way that He continues to be first in our affections freeing us from carnal loves. That is, in the daily pursuit of encountering God in our lives, He is able to affect, transform and sanctify us (1 Peter 3:15; Psalm 89:15; 100:4; 105:4; John 15:1-17).

Worship: What it's not

What our philosophy of worship at CBC is *not* should be noted because we believe that the impact of the status quo "man-centered" worship, seen far too often today has resulted, according to John MacArthur, in "*the loss of scripture's centrality in the life of today's church, which is sadly both common and lamentable.*" It is this loss that has allowed far too many churches to transform worship into entertainment, gospel preaching into marketing, being good into feeling good about ourselves, and faithfulness into being successful. That's not what we are all about. Scripture is replete with condemnations of false worship.

It is the desire of Community Bible Church that there be worship that keeps to the foundational themes of the New Testament. Therefore CBC must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship; we are not. Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success.

The Lord describes false worshipers in Isaiah 29:13 saying, "this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men." We will strive to heed that warning, and warnings posed regarding worship conducted in disobedience to God (Lev 10:1-2; Nu 3:2-4; 1Sa 15:1-23; 2Ki 17:33), insincere worship (Mt 15:8-9; Mk 7:6-7; Col 2:23), worship lacking in due humility and reverence (Mt 6:5; Lk 18:10-14), and worship conducted in ignorance of God (Jn 4:22; Acts 17:22-23).

Worship Implications:

Our corporate worship will be authentic in its purpose and transparent in its presentation. Because God "inhabits the praises of His people" (Psalm 22:3) and "opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6) we steer away from "performance" based styles in favor of congregational participation for the purpose of our people encountering the Lord.

Because we value a public worship form that communicates the supremacy of God in all of life, it will focus on God. Although the form may vary the message will not. It will be designed to encourage an expectancy and eagerness for God to draw near to us in reviving and renewing power. This means that worship is not meant to serve our preferences, prejudices, or pleasures (Eph. 4:1-5).

We will worship with an appreciation for both the old and new (Matthew 13:52). We will be true and relevant within our culture insofar as it provides effective communication of true worship to the Living God from his bride the Church. Corporate worship will involve multiple worship arts, implementing each with stylistic integrity. Our worship will be multi-dimensional and multi-cultural, as it reflects God's people He saved from all corners of the earth.

We view corporate worship as the biblical and fitting venue for the open expression of our redemption, love and devotion. In our corporate worship services we will be diligent in our desire to encourage, assist and equip the body for a lifestyle of worship.

We will sing, play, pray, and preach in such a way that people's attention will not be diverted from the substance by shoddy ministry or by excessive finesse, showmanship or refinement. Natural, un-distracting excellence will be the standard of the worship ministry.

We endeavor to express worship that is authentic and Spirit driven, intently purposed towards glorifying God, by recognizing and using gifts and talents He has given His people, and offering those gifts back to Him as a sacrifice of praise. In John 4:23-24, Jesus instructs us to worship in Spirit and in truth, telling us that God the Father seeks such worshipers.

We endeavor to develop, equip, and challenge musicians to continually grow more adept at their musical craft, and to model worship for the church. Psalm 33:3 instructs us to sing new songs and play skillfully unto the Lord.

We commit to being fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, consistently seeking God in His Word, in prayer, in devotion, and in expressions of worship. In Matthew 4:8-11, Jesus sets the example of the standard of worshiping the Lord and serving Him alone.

We commit to upholding lifestyles and creating a worship environment that draws others into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Romans 12:1 commands us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices as a spiritual act of worship.

We commit to offering our hearts before God as the first fruits in our lives, letting the overflow of our hearts be praise and thanksgiving to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ascribing to Him glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. (Jude 1:25)

All forms of corporate worship expression will be diligently evaluated in light of the following rubric:

They must have a deep theological richness.

They must ignite the imagination and expand our biblical vision of the triune God and His glorious kingdom.

The songs we sing must have a radiant beauty of expression both lyrically and musically.

They must have a profound sense of the Holy Spirit's anointing.

Our hearts the offering:

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalms 51:15-17)

God the center:

Nothing keeps God at the center of worship like the biblical conviction that the essence of worship is deep, heartfelt satisfaction in Christ, and the conviction that the pursuit of that satisfaction is why we get together in the first place. Come to church on the lookout for God, leave church on the lookout for people. “As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs for you, oh God.” (Psalm 42:1)
Worship connects the parched soul with the presence of God where there is “fullness of joy and at His right hand is pleasure forevermore.” (Psalms 16:11)
Worship is an opportunity for people to creatively relate to a relational Creator.