



Essentials for a Healthy Church:

Spirit-filled & Heart-felt Worship

February 17, 2019

The Worship of the Early Church

ICEBREAKER: Introduce any newcomers to your group this week & recap a bit of the discussion from last week. How did it go? What adjustments do we need to make this week to our format or approach?

OPENER: *What is the most unusual place and/or circumstance where you have ever worshipped God?*

A survey of healthy churches found a key ingredient to be “inspirational worship” services. By this, members indicated that they felt “encouraged” and “uplifted” during their times of worship and that they found the services to be “meaningful” to them in their spiritual walk. Thus, they looked forward to participating in these services for those reasons and not simply out of a sense of “duty” or “obligation.” The Latin word *‘inspiratio’* from which we get ‘inspiration’ is a reference to the work of God’s Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is present and at work, we would expect Him to have an uplifting and encouraging effect not only on the services but also on the entire atmosphere of the worship. We might also expect the Spirit to convict individual hearts of sin. Today we want to look at the very first worship experience of the early church and discuss how the Spirit moved among the early disciples. Little more than a week after Jesus’ ascension into Heaven, the disciples gathered with Jews from all over the world to celebrate the day of Pentecost. It became the day known as the “birthday” of the church.

DIG: READ ACTS 2:1-41

- What had prompted this amazing crowd of Jews to gather from all corners of the world on this occasion?
- How was it evident that the Holy Spirit had come? How did the Spirit reveal Himself? What would you have thought seeing this?
- What did the Spirit “do” when He showed up?

- Note the response of the crowd to Peter’s preaching. Can you share a time when you felt ‘cut to the heart’?
- What is the connection between repentance, baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit?
- Who was this promise (of the Holy Spirit) for?

Read **vss. 42-43**

- Why do you suppose everyone was “filled with awe”?
- Discuss the correlation between the coming of the Spirit, the “awe” present in the church and the amazing way the “Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (**vs. 47**)

Discuss:

- How would you have reacted to Peter’s sermon? Anger? Embarrassment? Guilt? Fear? Other?
- Do we still feel the power of Peter’s sermon, or has the story become too old and familiar to us?
- Are you typically aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit today when you come before God in worship? Why or why not?
- What was attractive about this early faith community to people around them do you suppose?
- How do we show our passion and joy in Christ to others?
- How have you put the gift of the Holy Spirit to use in your life?

PRAY

- Be sure to close with a time of prayer. How can we pray for you tonight?

BEFORE YOU GO!

- Remember the ‘empty chair’! Who will you invite to be a part of this group next week?
- Group leaders, send the names of those in your group to jblack@fpunet.com or text it to 931-993-3246. Designate someone to send in a count for your group each week! That can be e-mailed directly to the church at wscoc@fpunet.com