

Reverence for God in Worship (Eccl. 5:1-7)

Intro: When we come together for worship it is important to remember who the audience is! We often acknowledge those present at the service as the audience, especially in the teaching portions of our worship. However, it may be helpful to remember the “other” audience—God!

All of our lives should manifest respect for Him; but our times of worship should especially manifest respect for God. Let’s consider for a few moments the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5 as he gives us some guidelines for worship.

God should be respected in our worship!

“Fear God!”

No phrase in this section more profoundly explains the reason to fear God than the phrase in verse 2: “God is in heaven and you are on earth”. If only we could get people to see that!

Solomon’s point is not merely to define the location of God or the seat of God’s presence; but to stress to us the ultimate superiority of God over everything and especially over us. He is in heaven; we are on the earth!

The language reminds us of God’s superior position over everything, a position that immediately suggests His superior wisdom, power, and holiness.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)

How Do We Show Respect for God in worship?

Approach God with a sense of His greatness!

Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. (Ecclesiastes 5:1)

“Guard your steps” means pay attention to the way you approach the matter of worshipping and serving God. We must approach God out of respect for His role as the Creator.

Do we sense the awesome nature of this occasion? Did our preparations show reverence for God, as if we were doing something very important and serious? Does the time of our arrival show our respect for the occasion? Does our demeanor and dress indicate a reverence for God? Does the worship focus on our entertainment or His glory? Answering all these questions honestly can tell us a lot about our attitude.

Come to listen rather than come to talk!

Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to

bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few. For the dream comes through much effort, and the voice of a fool through many words. (Ecclesiastes 5:1-3)

What a powerful statement: listen to God rather than offer the sacrifice of fools.

We can only approach God in His way. The one lacking wisdom is always sure he knows more than God and has a better way than God's way.

"But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20)

The idea is not "be quiet" when you enter the church building; but approach God with respect and listen for His instructions. Likewise, Solomon wants us to see that we should approach God with open mind and a closed mouth! We need to come for ideas rather with ideas. We need to let Him set the agenda for our lives, not bring our agendas to Him..

Do we stand enough in awe of God to realize how important it is to listen!??

Give God the deeds of reverence rather than pious promises!

When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands? For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God. (Ecclesiastes 5:4-7)

Solomon gives us the picture of someone who makes hasty promises that they did not reflect upon and thus left the presence of God with no real intention of keeping them. He does not follow through on His promises and when the messenger of God comes to ask why he has not obeyed he says, "It was mistake". He says that such behavior angers God and shows a lack of respect for Him.

I've heard many speeches from people through the years in the hospital room about the changes they were going to make, if God would just get them through the crisis of the moment. And then when everything was well again, they forgot their promise! But non-Christians are not the only ones that make false vows.

I suspect that there will be as much lying in church building across America today as there will be in the houses of sinners. It will come in the form of pious yet empty vows that people will make to God.

People will sing "I want to be a worker for the Lord" who will not make the slightest effort to advance the work of the local church.

People will sing "Give me the Bible" but will not consult theirs for the next week.

People will sing "I love Jesus" but will not show love in obeying the Lord's commands.

God doesn't need our empty promises; and he will be angry with those who promise what they don't sincerely want to do! Follow through on your promises.

If you say I want to know more about the word of God, then start taking the classes the church offers and come to the assemblies where his word is studied and explained.

If you say I want to work for the Lord, find the areas where you can be useful and get busy offering your help and assistance to the work.

If you say you want to be holy, start to work on your character flaws and try to become a better person.

This shows that we truly respect God!

It is easy to mistake assembling for worship with fulfilling our duty to God on a daily basis. Not a few Christians seem to manifest this spirit, that as long as I put in my time at the building, I have done my part!

No, this is preparation for the work that needs to be done day by day. I remember reading of a meeting place where a sign above the auditorium door read "enter to worship". Another sign was placed on the exit door. It read "depart to serve"! This is how we show reverence for God!

Conclusion: Solomon's approach to worship reveals a clear understanding of the differences between a casual and superficial relationship to God and a serious and committed relationship with Him. May we take our relationship with God seriously and follow up our worship with true service to the Lord day by day!