

Is congregational worship necessary?

By [Chad Brooks](#)

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I stumbled upon [this blog post](#) tonight. The pastor is explaining why his church will disband weekly worship in favor of an extremely intense discipleship ministry and a once a month large meeting.

Some of it sounds really good. He hits the nail on the head regarding several issues. For those that have a heavy heart for missions and the justice of God his language really fits into the movement that the evangelical church has been going towards in correcting some of its inclusiveness and narcissistic ways.

But I think this is a great example of doing all the right things completely wrong.

Can a church that doesn't worship truly be the church? Before you go wild on me, read the whole post. The pastor gives the idea that the actions in worship aren't formational enough to be important.

I am not saying we do away with them, but we preach and sing too much and serve and love in radical ways far too little. The answer is not to add love on top of the sermons and songs, but to decrease the sermons and songs and increase the service and love to create a balance that looks like the life of Jesus.

John Wesley notes that good works are only possible once a vibrant and intense relationship with Christ exists in the heart of the *individual*. His sermon [The Almost Christian](#) speaks about justice being evident to those who still haven't turned their hearts over to Christ. [Justification by Faith](#) mentions that the things of love cannot truly be done in the name of Christ unless we have we have directed our own entire love to him. Finally in his sermon, [The Way to the Kingdom](#),

Wesley really develops this by explaining how our good works are only truly righteous when they spring from the inward spirit that is truly only devoted to God.

I don't mention these things to question the faith and salvation of these folks, but to plead for worship. Hebrews 10:25...*"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* **The eschatological makeup of the Church in worship lives with the expectation of the return of Christ.**

When the worship meeting becomes an evangelical outreach only, I would agree with many of the reasons for an evaluation. But worship should never be seen as a pragmatic event to draw people in. Worship develops a ragtag group of people into an eternal priesthood. We worship because we love Jesus Christ and want to join with the church around us, before us and in front of us in praising the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Worship staunchly stands against the world and says "No!!!"**

Worship stands in an intense relationship with justice. The Old Testament prophets had two messages for Israel; That their worship was bad and the poor in the streets were neglected. My friend [JD](#) has mention that if injustice exists in the streets idolatry is present in the sanctuary. The two are not held in opposition or competition, but a co-eternal dance. Mission and worship are in deep cahoots with each other.

Worship develops us into a people that can face the world head on, and bring the kingdom to it. We can't participate in the *missio dei* without also participating in the *doxo dei*.

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