

**The Lord's Table must be received cautiously.** As Christians fellowship together around the Lord's Table, they must be mindful of the warning given in Ecclesiastes 5:1, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools." Without preparation, there should be no participation. Participants at the Lord's Table must take time for personal examination (I Cor. 11:28) or they are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (I Cor. 11:27) and will experience the judgment of God, sickness, or even death (I Cor. 11:29).

Assembling around the Lord's Table is to "show the Lord's death till He come" (I Cor. 11:26). There is no remembrance more sacred, humbling or beneficial than the remembrance of the once and for all sacrifice of the Savior who died upon the cross for sinners. All participants must be warned of the sacredness of this memorial.

In John 21:12 Jesus says, "Come and dine." This wonderful invitation was given only to His disciples. Likewise, the invitation to the Lord's Table is to be given to the followers of the Lord. Judas entered the Upper Room for the Passover but left as the revelation of the New Covenant ratified by the personal sacrifice of the Lamb of God was revealed. Non-Christians do not have the capacity to understand the things of the Spirit (I Cor. 2:14). They cannot understand the significance of the payment that Jesus made for sinners and they must not be welcomed to the Lord's Table.

#### WORSHIP – WHEN?

While the body of the believer is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, there is a special presence enjoyed when believers gather in the worthy name of Jesus (Matt. 18:20). Christians can and should enjoy a personal and powerful walk with the Lord. Yet, the assembly of the believers is essential – not just for encouragement but for "worship!"

Colonial Hills Baptist Church schedules four distinct services each week and many Bible studies during the week. While individual churches should define their services as they see fit, Colonial designs its Sunday morning service specifically as a "worship service" and seeks to have every essential element of worship be part of every morning service. While our Sunday evening service may appear very similar to our morning service, the purpose differs. The evening service is broader, offering opportunity for congregational business, testimonies of missionaries, participation of select groups (children's choirs, teen choirs), skype conversations, and fellowships. Our mid-week service focuses predominately on prayer and testimony. It is our Sunday morning service that allows the congregation to assemble on The Lord's Day "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5).



CONNECTING TO COLONIAL'S CORE - 6

PASTOR PHELPS

### SACRIFICIAL GIVING & SHARING COMMUNION

Thomas Jefferson once said, "In matters of style, swim with the current: In matters of principle, stand like a rock." Jefferson's sage advice reflects Scriptural wisdom. Believers are called upon to practice deference by esteeming others better than themselves (Phil. 2:3). Believers are also called upon to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Understanding when to defer and when to contend is not easy. Unity is desirable (Ps. 133) but apostasy is intolerable (I Tim. 6:5). Every member of Colonial Hills Baptist Church needs to know when to defend and when to defer. There are times to stand and there are times to swim. Understanding how to respond to the ever-flowing tide of change requires that we recognize our DNA (Distinctively Non-negotiable Attributes).

The worship of Colonial Hills Baptist Church is regulated by the Word of God (John 4:24). "It is unwarrantable and unlawful to introduce into the government and worship of the church anything which has not the positive sanction of Scripture" (William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, p. 27). Adding elements to worship which are not tied to Scripture demonstrates a fundamental disregard for the Word of God and deifies the opinions of men.

There are five elements of worship found in the New Testament and central to Colonial's Core: 1. Scripture-centered preaching, 2. Soul-stirring singing, 3. Supplication before the throne of grace, 4. Sacrificial giving, and 5. Sharing communion.

CONNECTING

## SACRIFICIAL GIVING

What motivates your giving? Is it the maintenance of local ministry? Is your giving motivated by a fearful obligation to tithe? We ought to give because “giving to God is an essential element of worship” (The Glory Due His Name, Gary Reimers, p. 36). A careful study of the Old Testament reveals that it is impossible to divorce the act of giving from the act of worship (Ps. 96:8; Is. 66:20).

Sacrificial giving declares the individual worshipper’s dependence upon God (Phil. 4:19), demonstrates an “other-worldly” mindset (II Cor. 4:18) and declares appreciation for the One who gives “richly all things to enjoy” (I Tim. 6:17). Sacrificial giving is more than just a tradition. Every believer worships God by demonstrating their fidelity to Him when they give.

**Give God Your Tithe.** There are many who note that tithing is an Old Testament practice and it is not applicable for New Testament believers because they are “under grace.” They argue that the New Testament doesn’t “tell us” to tithe. Gary Reimers asks, “Is it at least possible that God believes the Old Testament revelation on a given subject to be sufficient, with no need to reaffirm or elaborate in the New Testament” (The Glory Due His Name, p. 37).

While it is true that the “tithe” was an integral part of the Mosaic Law it is also true that tithing existed long before the Law was given. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18-20). Jacob promised to give a tithe of all that he had to God (Gen. 28:20-22). Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees while commending their tithing (Luke 11:42).

The author of the book of Hebrews writes to New Testament believers who are finding it difficult to leave the worship forms of the Old Testament. The inauguration of the church age did not immediately inspire the followers of Christ to abandon the Temple and the familiar forms of worship conducted there (Acts 21:26). In Hebrews 7, New Testament believers are told that Christ is a better priest than Aaron. Christ is a better priest because He is of the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:17, 21). Just as the Old Testament believers brought tithes to the sons of Levi, New Testament believers tithe to a priest named Jesus who is after the order of Melchizedek and “lives forever” (Heb. 7:8).

**Give your offering.** The Old Testament worshipper brought “tithes” out of obligation, three times each year (Dt. 16:16-17). “Offerings” were given voluntarily (Dt. 12:5-6). “The tithe can demonstrate one’s submission to God as an act of obedience to His command; the freewill offering can indicate the degree of one’s devotion to God” (Reimers, p. 40). A freewill

offering is by its very nature discretionary (II Cor. 8:8; 9:7). The giver is to determine the value of the gift. There is, in the Old Testament, however, an expectation that “offerings” will be brought by those who would worship wisely (Dt. 16:16; Mal. 3:8-12). The Psalmist instructs all worshippers to, “Bring an offering, and come into his courts” (Ps. 96:8). An offering is an essential ingredient in worship and it is expected that every believer will bring an offering every time the believer worships.

## SHARING COMMUNION

Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of me” (Lk. 22:19). Failure to observe the “Lord’s Table” is disobedience. Just as the nation of Israel courted the judgment of God by failing to offer worthy sacrifices (Mal. 1:6-10) the New Testament saint invites chastisement when the communion table is forgotten or approached unworthily (I Cor. 11:27-29).

While preaching, praying, singing, and giving are essential elements of every true worship service, the Lord’s Table seems to be an element of New Testament worship to be observed at specially purposed occasions. I Corinthians 11 speaks of “coming together” as a church (v. 18) and “coming together” for the purpose of observing the Lord’s Supper (v. 21f). While some churches share communion each time they gather to worship, others prefer to observe communion in a periodic fashion.

**The Lord’s Table must be received congregationally.** The Lord inaugurated the communion service as He gathered with all of the apostles during the Passover (Lk. 22:14). As the nation of Israel observed the Passover collectively (Ex. 12:47), the church is to gather together as a congregation to share in communion. I Cor. 11:20-34 speaks of a gathering of believers and speaks in the plural (ye) when providing specific instruction for participation.

There are denominations that teach their followers that they receive “grace” when they ingest the elements of communion. Because of this teaching, they are willing to make home visits carrying with them bread and wine. Such a practice does not conform to the clear teachings of the New Testament and should be rejected.

Believers should be reminded that the Lord’s Table is a “local church” ordinance. Instructions having to do with participating in communion were given to the church at Corinth not to individuals in Corinth. The Lord’s Table is to be observed congregationally. Those who “forsake the assembling together” (Heb. 10:25) live in double disobedience. They are disobedient to the Scriptures clear command to assemble and they are disobedient to the Lord’s command to participate in communion (I Cor. 11:24).