

PREPARE FOR CORPORATE WORSHIP

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“Come from your knees to the sermon, and come from the sermon to your knees”

— Joseph Alleine

Children of God worship God corporately. They love to worship God with other believers. And since believers gather together to exalt the Lord and hear from Him through the preached Word, how does one rightly prepare for corporate worship? After all, one will only get as much out of corporate worship to the degree that he prepared himself for it. To neglect preparation is to cripple oneself. So how does the Christian prepare?

1. PRAY

One of the best ways to prepare for corporate worship is for the child of God to pray. He must pray for God's glory to be put on display. He should pray for the preacher to herald God's Word with God's power. He should pray for other believers to come hungry and grow in all knowledge and discernment. He should pray for nonbelievers that will be present to hear the Word and that God would penetrate their hearts with the gospel and bring them to repentance. And the Christian must pray for himself, that he would focus on Christ, put off all distractions, shun a wandering mind, be pierced to the heart, be comforted, convicted, conformed, and captivated by Christ and by His Word. Believer, in your preparation, you must pray!

2. READ

A believer can ready himself for corporate worship by reading the text of Scripture from which the man of God will preach. This is especially easy if the preacher consistently teaches through books of the Bible, so where he left off last week is where he'll begin this week. Read it ahead of time. Meditate on it. Do a little study of the text. Seek to apply it and understand it and know it. Then you will get more out of it when God speaks through the man as he opens the Word and feeds your soul. Read the Word and prepare!

3. REPENT

Every Christian makes it a habit to repent. Since every believer still battles with ongoing sin, he must confess his sins and repent of them constantly. To prepare, a child of God should examine his heart and repent of all known sin. He should kneel and beg God to expose the sins of his heart and life so that he can grow in his Christlikeness. Repenting of all known sin before the sermon can allow the child of God to hear the Word of God with fullness of joy and with eagerness knowing that God is glorified with purity.

4. ANTICIPATE

Too many Christians attend church and anticipate nothing to come from it. A child of God should remember that the glory of corporate worship consists in the fact that the people of God will together meet with and hear from the Living God of the universe. O that believers would anticipate this! Long to meet with God! Expect to hear from God! Hunger for more of Him! Come with the oven warmed so that when the Bread is put into it, it is ready to cook. Anticipate and expect great things in corporate worship.

4. IMPLEMENT

Even before the service and prior to the sermon, the believer can ready himself by praying and planning on implementing the sermon *specifically*. For those who take notes, perhaps a believer can write down (even during the sermon) one or two things that he must apply and implement in his life *that very day/week*. A sermon that is not implemented is a sermon that has fallen on rocky soil. True believers hear the Word of God and *do it*. Deceived people are those who sit in churches, hear the preached Word, are momentarily excited by the preached Word, and yet they refuse to apply it to their lives with conscious, deliberate efforts. O believer, apply and implement God's Word that is preached! Pray ahead of time to be alert to how you need to change. Then, rise from your knees to go to the sermon. Then, when the sermon is over, return to your knees in prayer and asking for God's help and depending on God's Spirit to graciously enable you to submit to God's Word so that you would glorify Him in the *doing* of His Word.