



CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

## The Dialogue of Worship

Communing with God is like eating with someone around your table in your dining room. In that kind of setting, you can let your guard down; there's no need for pretense. Dining with someone is an opportunity for you to listen to them, to get to know them, to enjoy their company. It is an opportunity to share your heart, to communicate something of yourself. There is a mutual give and take that happens around a table. You listen as the other person speaks, and then you respond in dialogue with that person. And as you do, your relationship with that person grows deeper as you get to know them better.

This should describe the nature of our relationship with God: dining with him. We listen intently as he speaks to us through his inspired Word. And our goal in listening to his words is not simply to gain more knowledge; our goal is to know him better, to learn his likes and his dislikes, to enjoy his company. And then we speak back to him; we tell him how much we love and adore him; we share something of ourselves and cast our burdens on him. And as we share this communion, our relationship with God grows deeper. This is why worship is profoundly relational; all true worship is communion with God. Jesus described this kind of dialogical nature of worship when he said to the Samaritan woman in John 4 that God desires those who will worship him in spirit (our response toward God) and truth (God's Word to us).

Historically, church worship services have been designed in such a way to both display and nurture this kind of communion by being structured as a dialogue. God speaks, we respond. God speaks to reveal himself to us and call us to worship, we respond with praise and adoration. God speaks to remind us of our sin and unworthiness, we respond with confession. God speaks words of pardon through Christ, we respond with thanksgiving. God speaks words of instruction to us, we respond with dedication. God speaks a charge and blessing upon us, we respond by going out in obedience. This dialogue of worship is why our services contain abundant Scripture—God's words to us—and prayers—our words to God.

The structure of our services, the songs we sing, the Scriptures we read, the prayers we pray—everything about our services shapes our minds and our hearts to be the kind of people who will commune with God like this regularly as individuals in private times of communion, and as families in times of family devotion.



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