

## NEW LIGHT

### **WORSHIP**

Worship is the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration of a deity/God.

It is an act of religious devotion usually directed towards God. This act may be performed individually in an informal way or communally by a formal group.

In the Old Testament and New Testament worship is to bow down to God or having faith in God. Thus all activities that people do to show their faith in God are acts of worshipping God.

The true worship of God is essentially internal, that is it is a matter of the heart and spirit rooted in the knowledge and obedience to the word of God.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that **“But the hour is coming and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the father in the spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him” John:4;23**

In Hebrew worship comes from the verb Shachar which means to bow down, to prostrate one’s self before the Holy God or His holy place or to lay flat before God. This is the Old testament meaning of worship.

In English it is derived from the word worthiness that is worth to Give. Thus worship is giving worth respect to God.

God must be worshipped by means of our own humanity and by the holy Spirit who gives us utterances when we are at loss for words during prayers. Romans: 8;26.

Worshipping God with insincerity is all for nothing. It is useless to God and does not glorify Him. This is referred to as empty worship.

### **WHY DO WE WORSHIP GOD? (DISCUSSION)**

1. Through worship we surrender our lives to God and He takes control of our entire being. We offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.
2. Man worships God so as to keep the image of God in him holy and perfect. Man was created in God’s image and must keep this image by relating with God in acts of worship.
3. Man worships God to fulfill the major objective of God creating him. For he was created to know God, love God, serve Him when on earth and praise Him eternally.
4. We worship God to remove our worries, our opinions and our questions. Worship enables man to let go of everything that worries him.
5. We worship God to sacrifice our entire selves and feelings as well as fears to God who can change what we take as unchangeable.
6. We worship God to reduce our pains and loss. King David demonstrated what it means to worship in the face of loss and pain when he lost a child. 2Samuel 12:16-20.
7. We worship God as a means of knowing and celebrating who God really is and what he has done for us. This is majorly done by giving praise. For example, in the song of “what the lord has done for me”. Thus through worship we give gratitude to God.

8. We worship God as a means of looking for His eyes and aid from his holy throne to enable us face trials with courage and confidence in Him.
9. We worship God to live under His blessings for God promised blessings to those who worship and serve him faithfully.
10. Worshipping God is a way of accepting our inferior position and dependence on Him as we acknowledge God's supremacy over us.
11. We also worship God as a preparation for unending life to be extended to believers at the time of Jesus' second coming for all those who will be found still watching will have eternal life.
12. Generally, we worship God to express our faith and obedience to Him. For this is the first commandment **"WORSHIP NO ANY OTHER GOD BUT ME"**.

### **PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

**For effective worship to take place preparation is needed and expected. This is because worship is a holy activity which must be done in holiness.**

**Good preparation for worship involves the following;**

- **Making one's heart ready to meet the lord which will require focus on the activity.**
- **Before the service one should seek the lord in private prayer.**
- **One should read scriptures before public worship.**
- **One should have time for meditation by fixing one's self to Jesus Christ.**
- **Reconciling with one another so as to create peaceful environment for worship.**

### **WHY SHOULD WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP?**

- **We prepare for worship so as to create order during public worship 1Corinthians 14;26.**
- **To be ready to give honour and praise to God when we are worth.**
- **To allow the Holy spirit work among us and influence our entire lives during worship.**
- **To enable us understand the word of God preached and be able to live by it.**
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### **MAJOR TYPES OF WORSHIP.**

These are majorly five that is corporate/group worship and Personal/individual worship.

**WORSHIP AS HOMAGE/GREAT SUBMISSION TO GOD;** It means bending over or bowing down. It is a gesture of total submission to God. GEN 18 ;2, EXODUS18;7 and 20; 4-6

**WORSHIP AS A SERVICE;** The people of Israel were saved from slavery in Egypt so that they could serve the lord. Exodus. 3;12 and exodus 8;1.

Service of God was expressed in rituals such as offering sacrifices and circumcision.

In the New Testament, Jesus' death is seen as a sacrifice of atonement for by his death forgiveness of sins was extended to human beings. Romans 3;25.

**WORSHIP AS RESPECT FOR GOD;** Sometimes worship is described in words meaning fear, reverence or respect for God indicating the need to keep his command. Deuteronomy 5;25 and Ecclesiastes 12;13

**“Have reverence for God and obey his command because this is all that human beings were created for”.**

**CORPORATE WORSHIP/GROUP;** This is when church members as a whole or a group of believers gather to pay homage, give thanks, or lay flat on ground before God.

St. Paul said “I appeal to you brothers by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship” Romans:12;1.

**INDIVIDUAL WORSHIP;** This is when a person/ a believer pays homage, give thanks, bow down silently closes his eyes in prayer or lays flat before God.

### **IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE WORSHIP (SPIRITUAL BENEFITS) DISCUSSION**

1. **Corporate worship helps in awakening one’s spiritual fire** for is done in a group of believers with different spiritual gifts.
2. **Corporate worship enables people to accept spiritual leadership** because it reminds us that our own faith is reception that is grows by receiving form others but not our own initiation.
3. **Corporate worship accelerates joy among Christians.** Due to group participation, believers’ adoration and joy in Jesus double.
4. **Through corporate worship believers obey God’s command.** Attending worship is a command by God and following this command in not optional. Hebrews: 10;25
5. **Group worship increases the preacher’s/ religious leader’s chance to care for believers.** Through corporate worship the religious leader gets a chance of nurturing the spiritual growth of believers. It helps the leader to get to know who we are so as to be able to pray, counsel and challenge us in our spiritual journey. Hebrews 13:17 and Acts 20:28.
6. **Through corporate worship community relationships are built.** Every one longs to be loved and known and this is only possible with group worship where genuine relationships are developed. Acts 2;42
7. **In community worship believers are able to get the correct interpretation of scriptures and their right application.** When people miss community worship, they are at a risk of making scriptures say what they want them to say. Scripture writers wrote in communities and so scriptures should be read and understood in the community. 2Peter:1;20-21
8. **Group worship increases the spiritual potential and capacity of believers.** It helps Christians develop Christian character for Christians are able to receive encouraging words, hugs and learn from one another. 1Thessalonians: 5;11-12.
9. **It increases the spiritual growth of an individual and the community as a whole.** Group worship is a primary way God inspires and excites spiritual growth in believers. Praising God with others gives us color, life and strength.
10. **Through community worship, the unique presence of Jesus Christ is felt and experienced.** This is directly rooted in the gospel that when two or three gather together for worship, Christ comes and stays in their midst. Mathew:18;20.
11. **Corporate worship enables Christians to serve other believers by using different gifts of the holy Spirit.** Spiritual gifts are used and shared as a community so when one skips public worship, he/she misses the blessings of the gifts ministered by different people. 1Corinthians:12;28 and Ephesians:4;11-12.

12. **Group worship helps in the extension of care and reception of care from other Christians.** Community worship provides comfort to those who are facing situations of discouragement.
13. **Community worship also strengthens people's faith.** In those Gatherings God uses people to give inspiring messages that strengthen those who are becoming weak in faith.
14. **It ushers us into the awaited heavenly worship at the end of the world.** When we gather for worship we experience in time what we will experience for all eternity.
15. **It helps people renew their sacred covenants with God and one another** by worshipping as a family of God.

#### **SOCIAL BENEFITS**

16. **Attending church services enable people to develop stronger social support networks that are very important for their survival.** People get a chance of making friends.
17. **Community worship gives us a chance to reflect on gratitude.** It helps one to change his outlook and stop dwelling on empty questions such as; "Why is this happening to me? It helps us to realize how blessed we are and how much we truly have.
18. **Leads to marriage/family stability.** Couples who attend church together report higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with in their marriages.
19. **Attending community worship restores peace.** People usually feel at peace whenever they go to church for it is a place of calm and joy. It provides a break off from daily hustles and disturbances.
20. **Group worship increases opportunities of charity.** Most churches through these gatherings offer some type of charity and assistance for their communities and other areas of need.
21. **Church worship provides lessons for our trials.** Through the sermons made by religious leaders, people get to understand how to deal with trials they undergo.
22. **It teaches forgiveness and allows reconciliation with one another.** It may be hard to let go the disappointments and annoyances yet if we are able to forgive we become free. It is only through community worship that one can learn to forgive and let go.

#### **HEALTH BENEFITS**

23. **Corporate worship reduces the likelihood of death and a reduction in the probability of stroke.** Research has shown that those who do not attend church regularly have short life span caused by circulatory, digestive and respiratory disorders.
24. **Group worship reduces the brain diseases** as it brings psychological contentment among those who attend worship.
25. **Group worship also boost people's immune system especially in cases of killer diseases.** Dr. Gail Ironson found that turning to God rather than rejecting Him boosts one's immune system to fight Aids disease.
26. **Group worship cures anxiety and saves one from falling sick.** According to St. Paul worship cures anxiety.
27. **Through corporate worship mental anguish is overcome.**
28. **People who attend worship are in most cases saved from depression** and so they smoke less, drink less and live healthier.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF PRAISE/SINGING IN WORSHIP (DISCUSSION)**

1. Praise/singing in worship invites the presence of God 2Chronicles 5:11-14

2. Praise/singing in worship leads to one's victory. 2Chronicles 20:15-20. **"Now when they began to sing and praise, the lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir who had come against Judah and they were defeated"**.
3. Praise/singing in worship brings deliverance from the enemies. Psalms 18:2 **"I will call up on the Lord who is worthy to be praised so shall be saved from my enemies"**.
4. Praise/singing in worship satisfies the soul. Psalms 63"1-5. **"O God you are my God early will I seek you. My soul thirsts for you my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water"**.
5. Praise/singing in worship repels depression Isaiah 61:3
6. Praise/singing in worship brings liberty that is people are freed from trouble. Acts 16:25=26. **"But at mid night Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them. The great earth quakes opened the doors and every one's chains were loosed"**.
7. Praise/singing in worship brings joy to a person. Psalms 100:4; 16: 11. "You will show me the path of life in your presence is fullness of joy at your right hand are pleasures for evermore. Singing expresses, the worshipper's inner by carrying a song on his lips.
8. Praise/singing draws men to God spiritually and physically. "and if am lifted up from the earth will draw all peoples to myself". John 12:32, James 4:8.
9. Praise/singing feels our hearts with the good news. Listening and singing hymns uplifts people and give them messages they may not otherwise hear.
10. Through songs people's loads they carry are sometimes lifted off their shoulders and they become peaceful in mind and body for singing heals the wounds on people's hearts.
11. Singing also helps the people of God to concentrate spiritually during worship.
12. Singing enables Christians to obey God's word. Ephesians 5:18-19. "But be filled with the spirit addressing one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
13. Singing helps Christians to go deep in the word of God. Singing stands as one of the ways that God has ordained for His word to dwell easily in each one of us. The melody and phrasing make the word of God memorable.
14. Singing builds up other people/Christians. Singing as a family exposes people to many testimonies of faith around them and songs act as counseling tool to those who have lost hope.
15. Singing/praise helps in conversion of non-believers. As we sing together as a church, we are helping unbelievers hear hundreds of testimonies which in turn convert them. Psalms 105: 1-2. "Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all His together to wondrous works".
16. Through singing people learn how to speak with God. It is important that by singing people get a wide vocabulary to use while addressing God.
17. Singing helps Christians to glorify God in a special way. Singing has such a special way of bringing our hearts souls minds and strength together to focus completely on God.
18. Singing helps Christians to have perfect fellowship with God as they edify their souls.
19. Singing helps to unite, encourage and inspire the body of Christ. For great music is inspirational and brings people together.

20. Singing makes the church and worship alive for it expresses our deepest feelings more powerfully than words alone.
21. Singing/music is a motivation to attending church worship and pulling more members to the church.
22. When people sing well they pray twice for the congregation pray powerfully when singing a great prayer hymn.
23. Through singing the inherent power of sacraments is brought out properly for people to understand. For example, Holy communion songs like "I am the bread of life"
24. Singing allows people to express their love to God with their whole being. Deut. 6:5.

#### **PROBLEMS OF SINGING AS A FORM OF WORSHIP (DISCUSSION)**

1. Sometimes some songs are destructive to the worshipers that they live the main aim and concentrate on singing only.
2. Singing is limited by language barrier in that when people sing songs in languages unfamiliar to them, the spiritual message is lost.
3. Sometimes singing makes the worshipers proud and end up sinning against God due to perfect singing during worship.
4. Sometimes singing makes church worship more of entertainment and thus limiting the spiritual benefits Christians would get.
5. Some melodies of songs are too good that Christians concentrate on enjoying the melody of the song instead of the message passed to them.
6. Sometimes singing makes the big number of believers to be passive during worship especially when new unfamiliar songs are sung by the choir during worship.

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PERFORMANCE MUSIC AND WORSHIP MUSIC (DISCUSSION)**

1. In performance the focus is on the musician/choir while in worship the focus is on Jesus/God.
2. In performance those on stage might be the only ones signing while in worship, everyone should be singing along.
3. In performance in most cases words support the melody while in worship the melody supports the words. In other words, in worship instruments accompany the words while in performance the words accompany instruments.
4. In performance the integrity of the musicians is secondary while in worship, the integrity of the musicians is essential.
5. In performance stand out voices attract people to it while in worship, stand out voices destruct people form it. In worship blending is necessary for the whole team.
6. Performers need to be skilled musicians while worship leaders need to be committed worshipers.

#### **WHY MANY PEOPLE DON'T SING DURING WORSHIP (DISCUSS WITH STUDENTS)**

1. They don't know the songs for many new songs are released which are unfamiliar to the worshipers which kills participation of all.
2. Some composed songs are not suitable for congregational singing because their rhythms and tones are too difficult for the average singers.

3. Sometimes singing is done in very high keys for the average singers. When songs are pitched in too high keys, the congregation will stop singing and become spectators.
4. Loud instruments might deter people from singing because of failure to hear the words sung by others hence remaining dormant during worship.
5. Sometimes the choir/person leading the singing during worship may be very soft to be heard by the congregation making it difficult to follow.
6. Modern churches have built a performance environment in worship than a worship environment making others spectators. Sometimes stages are made in the way that distract people from worshipping God.
7. Ignorance factor; In some churches Christians feel that they are not expected to sing because of the existence of the leading choir. They think that it is the responsibility of the choir to sing.
8. Sometimes worship leaders get so involved in the professional production of worship that they fail to be authentic to enable the congregation sing.
9. Failure to have a common body of songs. Songs are pulled from many sources less reinforcing the songs and helping the church to take them on as a regular expression of worship.
10. Worship leaders add lib(style) too much making the church fail to follow them. When we stray from the melody and add style, the sheep try to follow and end up frustrated and quit singing.
11. Worship leaders sometimes fail to connect with the congregation especially in terms of speed of songs which makes the church lose track and stop singing.

### **FASTING**

Fasting is the act of giving up food or something else for a period of time in order to focus one's thoughts on God.

When fasting the money one would have eaten is given to the poor and time is spent in prayers.

### **FORMS OF FASTING;**

#### **Fasting from foods.**

- a) Regular fast; This consists abstaining from all foods and drinks except for water. Mathew 4:2-3, Luke 4:2.
- b) A partial fast; It is when one abstains from some particular kind of food as in case of Daniel while in Babylon. Dan. 10:3, 1:8, 12.
- c) A liquid fast; Means that one abstains only from solid foods.
- d) A complete/ absolute fast; This entails no food or liquid of any kind and should be for a short period of time. Ezra 10:6, Esther 4:16 and Acts 9:9.
- e) Super natural fast; This is when one abstains from foods and liquid for a long period of time. For example, Moses abstained from food and water for 40 days. Deut. 9:9.

**TV/movie fast;** One can take a break from a weekly favorite and use the time to pray and read the Bible.

**Social media fast;** Instead of listening to top hits on radio or TV one can choose to listen to a Christian radio station for a period of time.

**Fast from going out;** One can look at the calendar and pick a day when he is supposed to go out and spend the time instead reading scriptures and in prayer.

#### **DURATION OF FASTING ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.**

The duration of fasting is relative and entirely depends on an individual as guided by the Holy spirit.

- a) One day or part of the day; Judges 20:26, 1Samuel 7:6 and Jeremiah 36:6.
- b) A one night fast; Dan 6:18-24.
- c) Three days fast; Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9
- d) Seven days fast; 1Samuel 31:13. 2Samuel 12:16-23.
- e) Fourteen days fast; Acts 27: 33-34
- f) A twenty-one days fast; Dan. 10:3-13.
- g) Forty days fast; 1Kings 19:8, Mathew 4:2.
- h) Fasts of unspecified length; Mathew 9:14, Luke 2:37 and Acts 13:2.

#### **TYPES OF FASTING**

1. **Occasional short fasts;** This lasts for six, twelve or twenty-four hours and it is the most manageable.
2. **Intermittent fasts;** It is a regular act of abstinence. For example, for a week one may abstain from food or make some other sacrifice.
3. **Longer fasts;** It can also take a form of abstinence or some other sacrifice.
4. **Extended fasts;** It is the hardest path of fasting. That is choosing to give up something that one needs or values for an extended period of time.
5. **Open ended fasts;** This is where some people make a commitment not to break the fast until their goals have been achieved.
6. **Occasional group fasts;** Such fasts can be called by a church or a group of churches or nation during a time of crisis.
7. **Longer group fasts;** the range of options for a group to fast is extensive.

#### **WHY DO CHRISTIANS FAST/IMPOTANCE OF FASTING (STUDENTS' DISCUSSION)**

1. Christians fast so as hear from God for fasting help them to sanctify themselves to enable the holy God approach and talk to them. Fasting makes Christians sensitive to God's voice.
2. Fasting enable Christians reconcile with God for it is an act of accepting one's sinfulness and a visible sign of repentance of sins. It is through fasting that one's hidden sins can be revealed.
3. Fasting provides Christians with spiritual strength to overcome all forms of trials and temptations. Through fasting Christians are dressed in God's armour to stand up against the devil's evil tricks. Ephesians 6: 11.
4. Fasting also builds and strengthens Christians faith in God. Through fasting, Christians give up worldly pleasures and concentrate on God.
5. Fasting fills Christians with divine powers necessary for liberating people from demons for demons tend to fear those who are holy. It through fasting that Christians can resist attacks from demons be able to cast them out.



6. Through fasting Christians grieve hard providences. Fasting gives Christians, a voice to mourning or lamenting difficult situations. 2Samuel 1:12, 1Samuel 31:13 and Esther 4:3.
7. Christians fast to seek God's favour. Christians fast to ask for God's guidance in their plans and programs to be favoured by God. 2Samuel 12:16 and Acts 13:2.
8. The act of fasting is a confession to Christians that they are still on a pilgrimage. It is a confession that they have not reached home yet they are not homeless.
9. Through genuine fasting, Christians are filled with the holy spirit and become empowered to live with Christ in a new way.
10. Fasting stimulates a deeper praise of God as we think about everything God is to us and all He has done.

## **PRAYER**

- It is a communication of a religious person to God and it can be personal or communal prayer.
- Prayer can be expressed in words spoken and sang, dancing with symbolic in actions and silence.
- Prayer expresses the faith of work and ruling motive of the religious believer.
- A person who prays believes that God is listening to him encouraging him to encourage him to understand his own experience in life.
- Man praises God's power manifested in creation and in the providential care of the world.
- Man is grateful to God for the blessing given to him and begs for forgiveness of sin.

## **ROLE OF PRAYER (STUDENTS' DISCUSSION)**

- It helps people to reconcile back to their father. He acts as guidance in daily life and through prayer one seeks protection.
- God becomes aware of people's needs, both material and many things He has done for them.
- Prayer comforts man amidst the many problems of the world like sickness, poverty.
- He pacifies God incase man has annoyed Him.
- Prayer makes man realize his dependence on God.
- It helps man express his commitment to God and it brings him closer to God.
- Prayer expresses faith, love and motives of the believer to God
- In search of the real meaning of life, the worshiper surrenders and opens oneself to a supernatural being called God.
- It introduces the one who prays into a new understanding of God
- It helps one to grow in the understanding and awareness of God and what he asks of us in life.
- It facilitates dialogue with God who listens to one's prayer
- Helps man to come closer to God and understand his own experience and God's presence in his life.
- It is a dimension of life which helps man to re-interpret his relationship with God.
- One can ask for forgiveness of sins through prayer and repentance
- We pray for others in sickness, when they have lost their dear ones etc.

## **PSALMS 23 THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD (Teach them a song for this Psalm)**

### **Reasons for prayer based on Psalm 23 (STUDENTS' DISCUSSION)**

1. People pray to get what to eat from God that is their life necessities. Thus prayer is necessary for divine providence.
2. People also pray to seek for God's protection for it is only God who can keep His people safe.
3. People pray also to escape or evert dangerous situations that they may meet on their way.
4. People pray so as to be strengthened by God spiritually and physically for man can only feel strong if he depends on God.
5. People pray so as to be directed and guided by God to the right direction. This will save them from stumbling in their lives.
6. People pray to God for rescue from forces of darkness and evil. Thus prayer makes Christians safe from evil attacks.
7. To make them happy for God is the source of eternal happiness and his divine hand and rod brings happiness to humanity.
8. People pray to God so as to receive divine anointing and blessings for God's blessings are eternal and the anointing of the Holy spirit gives righteousness.
9. People pray so as to invite God live with them, in them and by them. This makes them to fear nothing for they are with the mighty one.
10. People pray to God so that God can save them from the wrath planned by their enemies. He is only God who can destroy the plans of their enemies.
11. They pray so as to live in God's love and mercy in all the days of their lives on earth. Prayer makes them live in God's favour.
12. People pray so as to show their total dependence on God as their shepherd and the supreme controller of their lives.
13. They pray to God to enable them live with Him in His eternal house which is heaven the everlasting home of all believers.

### **DIFFERENT FORMS OF WORSHIP IN THE BIBLE. (STUDENTS' DISCUSSION)**

1. Prayer
2. Offering of sacrifices
3. Bowing down before the holy God
4. Building of alters
5. Fasting
6. Reading of scriptures
7. Circumcision
8. Holy offerings such as the first harvests and tithes
9. Observing food ritual and all other rituals of holiness
10. Keeping the ten commandments
11. Baptism
12. Celebrating the holy Eucharist
13. Participating in alms giving/works of charity
14. Performing of miracles
15. Engaging in fellowships

16. Repentance/forgiving one another
17. Exercising spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues
18. Signing of psalms

#### **FORMS OF WORSHIP IN PSALMS 33:1-5 (LET STUDENTS IDENTIFY THEM AFTER READIND)**

1. Praising God by shouting
2. Obeying God's instructions
3. Thanks giving to God
4. Singing to God
5. Playing different music instruments
6. Reading and listening to God's word/ scriptures

#### **CORRECT FORMS OF WORSHIP IN EXODUS 20 1-17 (Forms of worship derived from the ten Commandments) (STUDENTS' DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE BIBLE)**

1. To worship only one God who tolerates no rival
2. To bow down only to God rather than anything else
3. Loving God and obeying his laws
4. Respecting God's name by restraining one's self from using it in vain
5. Observing the Sabbath by keeping it holy
6. Respecting one's father and mother
7. Preserving life by restraining one's self from murder
8. Being faithful in marriage by restraining one's self from committing adultery
9. Restraining one's self from stealing
10. Restraining one's self from false accusations by being honest and trustful
11. Restraining one's self from coveting other people's property.

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL WORSHIP AND GROUP WORSHIP (STUDENTS' DISCUSSION)**

1. Individual worship is between one person and God while group worship is between many people and their God.
2. Individual worship is self-led while in congregational worship there must be a leader.
3. Individual worship is private so in most cases it takes place in private places while congregational worship is public.
4. Exercising of spiritual gifts is limited in individual worship while in group worship different spiritual gifts are exercised.
5. Individual worship can take place any time while group worship is time tabled and time bound.
6. Individual worship requires a small space while congregational worship requires a large space for worshipers to be comfortable.
7. Individual worship is more silent while group worship in most cases is loud.
8. Individual worship is more informal that is it depends on one's needs while group worship is more formal that is there is a program to be followed

#### **WORSHIP IN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

The early church community was a worshipping community. Christians most of their time would conduct worship. The early church worship was characterized by the following;

1. Prayers were conducted as part of worship. There were congregational and personal prayers.
2. During worship, Holy Spirit gifts especially speaking in tongues were used.
3. There was preaching and interpreting the word of God to the worshippers.
4. Worship involved the reading of scriptures that is to say the Old Testament scriptures and to a later time Pauline letters.
5. Baptism of new converts was part of worship and this was done through immersion.
6. Miracles would be performed during worship that is to say, the sick would be healed, the lame walked and so many others.
7. It required selling of the possession by the Christians and handing of the money to the apostles who distributed it to the believers.
8. Offering was very important during early church worship.
9. Giving of alms was part of worship. This was where Christians made a contribution to help the needy.
10. Christians praised God through the religious songs they had composed. Acts 2:42 – 46.
11. There was the breaking of bread and sharing the cup of wine in memory of what Jesus had done. (Celebrating the Lord's Supper). This was in memory of Jesus' death and resurrection.
12. During worship repentance / confession of sins was very important. Christians were required to confess their sins to one another as a sign of seeking for God's mercy.
13. Different musical instruments, clapping of hands and shouting were part of worship.
14. Prophecy was part of the early church worship.
15. Worship was also conducted in houses of people that is to say; different Christians would meet in different homes for prayer.

#### **SIMILARITIES TODAY VERSUS EARLY CHURCH:**

1. In both, congregational prayers are common.
2. In both, preaching is common.
3. In both, conversion and baptism goes on during worship.
4. In both, songs/psalms are very important during worship.
5. In both music instruments, clapping of hands and shouting are still common.
6. In both, reading of scriptures is part of worship.
7. Confession of sins is a main feature in both.
8. Fellowships are organized during worship in both.
9. Holy Eucharist is celebrated in both.
10. Alms giving are common in both.

11. In both, offertories are made.
12. In both, there are leaders who lead in worship.
13. In both, during worship they look at each other as brothers and sisters.

#### **DIFFERENCES:**

1. Today Christians have special buildings where worship is commonly conducted while in the early church it was conducted in houses and compounds.
2. Today many churches follow a formal order in worship while in the early church worship depended on situation and needs of worshippers.
3. Today only Holy Eucharist is shared while in the early church Agape meal and the Holy Eucharist were shared.
4. Baptism in most churches is through sprinkling or pouring of water while in early church through immersion.
5. Different Christians today use different elements when celebrating the Lord's Supper while in the early church bread and wine were used.
6. Spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues are rarely used in today's worship while in the early church they were common.
7. In the early church there was selling and distribution of money from property while today Christians selfishly own property.
8. In the early church worship took a longer time than today where it is short due to economic interests.
9. Those who led in worship in the early church were inspired while leaders today are just trained.
10. Today it is more of infant baptism than adult baptism as it was in the early church.
11. Today in some churches prayers are sold while in the early church they were free of charge.
12. Today worship is characterized by audio / visual gadgets for example public address system. while in the early church it was through word of mouth.
13. Today women play an active role during worship while in the early church they played a dormant role.
14. Today's worship there is a lot of show offs and pretense / hypocritical while in the early church worship was serious and genuine.

## **PROBLEMS CHRISTIANS FACE WHEN TRYING TO KEEP FAITH IN GOD**

- Isolation from peers due to religious differences.
- Lack of time for prayers due to tight schedule of work.
- Criticism from non-Christians and others who end up discouraging the loyal Christians.
- Bad examples from church leaders e.g. some rape their followers.
- Man's sinful nature which leads people to steal, rape and defile others.
- Influence of cults which carry out funny rituals and end up killing people like restoration of the 10 commandments by Kibwetere.
- Influence of science and technology where some think they are independent of God.
- Lust for wealth causes people to divert from God.
- Permissiveness in society where people do what they end up signing against God.
- Christian doctrines and dialogues which are hard to understand like "eat my body and drink my blood"
- Discrimination according to sex, beauty, tribe, status, leading to nepotism, tribalism and sectarianism.
- Language barrier where due to mixture of cultures some people fail to get the word of God preached.
- Backsliding of converts. This is due to confusion brought about by different preachers as well as the social-economic problems in the modern world
- Disunity that is to say existence of many denominations which sometimes preach against each other making Christians develop hatred for one another.
- Opposition and persecution from governments and non-Christians. Sometimes the government makes policies that limit people's search for God such as restrictions put on time for prayer, laws on noise pollution especially in cities and all that affect the would be seekers of God.
- Poverty: where by most of the people lack Bibles and other materials necessary to help them seek for the truth.
- Poor transport and communication as well as remoteness of some areas makes it difficult for the preachers to access different regions for evangelical purposes.
- Diseases for example malaria and other contagious diseases such as Ebola limit Christian activities that aim at searching for God.
- Political instabilities and insecurity caused by wars and rebel activities limit people's ability and time to pray, preach help the needy and worshipping God.
- Conservatism in the church for example neglect of women, youth in church leadership which limits Christians chances of exercising their gifts for proper searching for god.
- Traditional or cultural beliefs tend to be hostile to Christian faith for example; polygamy, witch craft and so many others.
- Negative foreign influence for example; homosexuality, lesbianism and so many others.

