

Exploring Worship and Mission

Creating Liturgy



A series of workshops designed to help local congregations explore different aspects of worship and their relation to mission



Aim: To explore the possibility of creating liturgy that relates to the questions of modern life.

Mission Thinking:



The following quote from Raymond Fung* could be very helpful: "The question is how Christian can worship together authentically (..) It is important that a worship service takes note of two things:

1. It must embrace the everyday concerns of the worshippers. They need to know that the things they care about from Monday to Saturday, God also cares about. That their lives which intersect with children, old people and working men and women are points of mission where God is at work and where transformation of lives, ours and others, can happen.

2. While worship embraces the cares and concerns of our mundane living, it does not deal with them primarily on the level of human relationships, economics or politics. (..)

We meet in worship to reaffirm our faith in the sovereignty of our great and compassionate God (..) such a worship is authentic and for that reason truly evangelistic.

To convey this sense of the divine embrace of daily living, in the awareness of God's love and power, all elements of worship should be brought into play."

Objectives:



- 1)** to identify contemporary situations for which a corporate act of worship would be appropriate.
- 2)** to consider new approaches to creating an act of worship, making use of appropriate symbols.
- 3)** to identify practical suggestions which are relevant to the local worship.

Practical matters.

The workshop leader – before the workshop think about:

- a 'non conformist', creative approach to liturgy
- how life and worship are linked
- how we can use symbols to express thought and prayers in worship

(if the workshop size becomes more than 15-20 it will be necessary to complete some activities in two groups.)

You will need:

- flipchart and marker pens
- strips of plain paper
- pens or pencils

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1. Welcome and introductions

(Duration 15 minutes)

1.1 Introduction the purpose of the workshop – the aims and objectives.

1.2 Clarify domestic arrangements, including the location of toilets, availability of refreshments

1.3 Invite participants to introduce themselves in turn by saying:

- a) Their names,
- b) Where they are from an
- c) By completing the following sentence in any way they wish:

“when I hear the word ‘liturgy’ what comes into my head is.....”

1.4 When everyone has spoken, comment briefly on the range of statements, especially when there are some negative feelings which people had when hearing about liturgy.

1.5 Talk about how people today meet God and one another in worship: “modern people hear with their eyes and think with their feelings!” This is to challenge the people not to come up with the usual elements of worship (prayers, scripture, etc) too quickly, when talking about how God is meeting his people.

2. The Situation

(Duration 10 minutes)

Give the example of an elders/deacons meeting where a request for the blessing of a house had been received. Someone had seen this happening in an African denomination and really felt that it would encourage him in his Christian life if his new house could be blessed. After some discussion it was decided that a committee should be formed to work out liturgy.

2.1 Ask the participants to come up with some other unusual requests-these are written down on a flip chart.

2.2 Allow a short time for discussion.

Give some time for everyone to make up his/her mind which idea they would like to work with to create an appropriate liturgy. Divide into small groups with a minimum of three participants, each group to work on one liturgy.

3. Creating a Liturgy

(Duration 35 minutes)

3.1 Challenge each group to reflect on the chosen situation and to make it more specific.

e.g. Scene of a road accident:

- The victim is a 6-year old girl
- This is known danger spot
- There has already been a request for the reduction of the speed limit.

e.g. Welcoming a new group of people into a worshipping community:

- The group are all partially sighted
- They have unsuccessfully tried to settle in a congregation before
- They have been meeting as a house group but want to be part of a wider community

e.g. A group of people learning and exploring together:

- Take the present group and context
- Prepare the closing worship

3.2 Then work on the liturgy.

What symbols could be used in the liturgy?

• To symbolise the ‘problem’,
e.g. a cloud with a mobile of raindrops (with pledges)
as a symbol of protection and support

• To symbolise the ‘coming together’
e.g. coloured ribbons woven together
as a sign of belonging

• To symbolise the interaction with God
e.g. jigsaw puzzle,
symbolising brokenness of life

3.3 Make notes, both of the specific situation and of a possible outline for a liturgy, indicating the use of symbols and the various elements to be included. Record on flipchart sheets ready to share with the rest of the group.

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4. Feedback

(Duration 20 minutes)

"Groups come back together to share their ideas and outline liturgies"

"Make time for questions and discussion."

4.1 In summary emphasis the importance of reflection on the situation as a starting point for creating liturgy; whenever there was a simple idea (for a symbol, or a venue etc.) among the presented outlined liturgies this should be highlighted; liturgy need be complicated. Even a simple idea can be very effective.

4.2 Ask participants to identify any particular idea/though arising from the workshop, which could fit in a ordinary Sunday morning service and which they would like to pursue in their local congregation .

4.3 Make a list of these suggestions on the flip chart – allow time for participants to write material down or arrange for it to be distributed later.

5. Closing Worship

(Duration 10 minutes)

Use the worship prepared by one of the groups.

Use this space to write down notes: