

GARY D. ERICKSON

*Pentecostal
Worship*

*A Biblical and
Practical Approach*

Pentecostal Worship

Gary D. Erickson

©1989, Word Aflame Press
Hazelwood, MO 63042-2299

Printing History: 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2007

Cover Design by Tim Agnew

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Printed in United States of America



WORD AFLAME PRESS

8855 Dunn Road, Hazelwood, MO 63042
www.pentecostalpublishing.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Erickson, Gary D., 1948-

Pentecostal worship: a Biblical and practical approach /
by Gary D. Erickson

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-932581-52-8

1. public worship—Pentecostal churches. 2. Pentecostal churches—Liturgy. I. Title.

BX8762.Z5E75 1989

264'.0994—dc20

89-38786
CIP

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C H A P T E R 1

The Restoration of Worship

A large, ornate, blackletter-style initial letter 'W' that begins the first paragraph of the chapter.

When we look at what is happening in the world today, we see an effort to restore apostolic worship. The awakening of the church in the twentieth century is more than just another trend toward new techniques to achieve old goals. This revival of worship is directed toward a new goal: ministering to the Lord!

We have seen a renewed emphasis on holiness. Great strides have been made in the area of missions and evangelism. Accurate doctrine has brought about a great expansion of our understanding of God's Word. Human ingenuity has fostered a kaleidoscope of methods: bus ministry, discipleship programs, contests, church growth seminars, denominational programs, camp meetings, conferences, media programs, tent revivals, and specialized ministries, all of which have been a blessing. Nevertheless, a church without heart-felt worship is like a plastic replica of the real thing. Worship puts the emphasis on God's glory and not on human achievements. Worship is a spiritual catalyst that makes things happen!

Pentecostal Worship

The revival of true worship is overdue. Most churches in our world today are beehives of activity, yet the actual worship services are a bore. A. W. Tozer described the situation well: "In the average church the most real thing is the shadowy unreality of everything. The worshiper sits in a state of suspended meditation; a kind of dreamy numbness creeps upon him; he hears words but they do not register, he cannot relate them to anything on his own level."¹ When we compare many modern churches to the apostolic church of the first century we realize something is missing. When the first church came together things happened! "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

The first church was unique in that many people in it had known Jesus personally. They had witnessed His ministry, death, and resurrection, and as a result their love for Him was fresh and keen. They were devoted first to their Lord and Savior who had risen from the dead and second to His teaching.

Although we cannot share with the first church in its unique position physically and historically, we can share with it spiritually. We can love Jesus with the same intensity and devotion as the first church. Worship transcends all ages, and it is a vital, life-producing ingredient in Christian service.

The apostolic church of the first century is a paradigm for Christian doctrine, conversion, methods of operation, ministry, and fellowship. Ephesians 2:20 says that we "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Since

the apostolic church is our pattern, it is very important for us to understand that it was a worshipping people. God desires that we worship just as the church that was born in Acts 2 did.

Our day has seen a great spiritual restoration. Much truth has been restored that was lost or obscured during the Dark Ages. We are seeing a revival of the baptism of the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in tongues, an experience that characterized the first church. There is also a revival of spiritual gifts, which the apostolic church enjoyed. Along with this restoration of truth and spiritual gifts is a restoration of apostolic worship.

There is a current interest in worship throughout Christendom. "We are living in a time when almost every major denomination has been affected by renewed interest in the history, theology, and practice of worship."² Many churches have been forced to evaluate their worship or lack of worship from a biblical perspective. There is a desire to turn from cold, formal traditions and return to real apostolic practices in worship. Even churches that have been practicing lively worship are wanting to fine-tune their efforts so as to add life to their services as never before.

All of this interest is not just happenstance. It is in the will of God.

David's Tabernacle

What is happening today is a restoration of the doctrine and practices of the New Testament church, and that church is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Amos: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his