

TTT382 - Guidance For Those Hosting Parts of Sunday Worship Series. Part 9 - The Closing Prayer

Today, we continue a series exploring why we do what we do at a Sunday gathering. Last week, we focussed on testimonies. Today's topic is the closing prayer.

Scripture and Closing Prayers

There's no evidence of a 'closing prayer' as a regular feature of NT worship, but we have almost no details about their services.

What about the OT? Psalms were an integral part of OT worship, and some psalms end with doxologies (a praise formula) or prayers that might have served a concluding role in worship. For example, Psalm 106 ends with:

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the Lord."

This is a prayerful conclusion to a worship service.

Church Traditions

Most Christian streams have a closing prayer or blessing at the end of their services. Some examples include:

- "May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."
- "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen."
- "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen."
- "Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather in your presence today. As we go forth, may your word be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Bless us and keep us safe until we meet again. In Jesus' name, Amen."

What has the Spirit revealed?

The closing prayer is an opportunity to pull the service threads together. What has struck you as

we have prayed, sung, fellowshiped, communion-ed and learned together? What has the Spirit revealed? "Father, thank you for showing us.....help us to....."

God's presence

Praying near the end of the service is also a reminder that we have been together *for* and *in* the presence of God. You are sending us back into the world to live what we have learned. Send us off *with God*. The song "Send Us Out" beautifully captures this idea:

1. Send us out in the power of your Spirit
To shine your light in the way we live
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
As we've received may we freely give

Chorus

Send us out, Send us out
Send us out for your glory
Let all we do, Be praise to you
Send us out for your glory

2. Send us out in the power of your Spirit
To show your love everywhere we go
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
Lord fill us up so we overflow

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Send us out with hope and faith because God *has* been with us and *will* be with us. "Father, thank you that you go with us from here..."

Question

As you prepare your thoughts, ask yourself, "What has the Spirit said to *this* congregation on *this* day?"

Conclusion

As mentioned in a previous article, there is no one way to pray on these occasions. Feel free to make up a prayer on the spot, use a Psalm or other Scripture as a template, or pray a prayer written by yourself or someone else.

Any thoughts? Please speak to me. Next time, we will explore in-between bits and pieces.

God bless, Malcolm

Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

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Keep calm and carry on teaching.

God bless, Malcolm