

Riverview Baptist Church

Theology of Worship by the Worship, Music, & Arts Committee

1. **We believe** our worship is reserved solely for God, and God alone (*Psalm 29.2, 148.1-13, Romans 11.36, Revelation 19.10, 22.9*). God is the subject and object of worship – it is about him and for him. God is the only one worthy of our praise. As the Creator God, he alone is deserving of the worship of his creation (*Psalm 29.3-10, Revelation 4.11*). Therefore, we will focus on praising only the Lord in our worship and will offer up a suitable and appropriate sacrifice of praise to his name. Our motivation for worship will be his pleasure, resulting in our own fulfillment and enjoyment.

2. **We believe** that God's glory and our celebration of it in worship should be the focus and goal of all life and ministry. Worship is the primary purpose for which God created human beings and is therefore our highest endeavor and greatest fulfillment (*1 Corinthians 10.31, Isaiah 43.6-7, Matthew 22.37, 1 Peter 4.11*). Therefore we will give worship careful focus and attention in the life of this church. We will relate all of our activities to it and to the goal of magnifying the glory of God.

3. **We believe** that our worship is acceptable to God in and through Christ our High Priest. We come to God clothed in his righteousness and by his worthiness (*Hebrews 8.1-2, 10.19-22*). Therefore we will exalt Christ in our worship. Moreover, we will not assume that our worship is made acceptable to God by any other means (such as excellence in worship or style of worship).

4. **We believe** our worship is enabled, motivated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. As God, the Holy Spirit deserves our adoration and praise as much as the Father and Son, yet he chooses to glorify not himself but rather point us to Christ and thus lead us to the Father in worship. The Holy Spirit motivates us for worship in assuring us of our standing by grace and filling us for the work of praise (*Philippians 3.3, John 16.14, Romans 8.14-17, 1 Corinthians 12.3, Ephesians 5.18-19*). Therefore, we will exalt Christ in our worship by the power of the Holy Spirit, and address our weaknesses by enlisting the Spirit's help in enabling us to desire, pray to, and worship God.

5. **We believe** that worship is the privilege of all of God's people. Every individual plays a vital role in the corporate worship of the church (*Psalm 79.13, 107.32, Romans 12.1, 15.5-6*). Therefore, we will encourage a whole-hearted participation in every way possible: by seeking to enhance the physical environment for worship through the use of artistic, seasonal, and orderly decorations; by carefully selecting music for worship so as to encourage participation while maintaining biblical and theological integrity; by encouraging participation in corporate prayer; by encouraging participation in the Lord's Supper on a regular basis, etc.

6. **We believe** that the heart attitude of the worshiper in response to and participation in worship is of more importance than an external response and participation in worship (*1 Samuel 16.7, Hosea 6.6, Mark 12.33*). Therefore the elements of our worship will aim at encouraging a response in the heart of the worshiper rather than being concerned with external responses to the form, style, or structure of worship.

7. **We believe** that worship should promote the unity and edification of the church. The church is, by divine design, a diverse group of disparate, saved sinners who can be unified in the Spirit (*Romans 15.5-6, Ephesians 4.1-6*). Therefore, we will exult in our diversity and

seek to learn from one another various expressions of worship. We will strive to keep the health of the whole body in mind when it comes to innovation or change in worship. We will not seek to promote personal agendas or preferences in worship, but prayerfully and deliberately seek the good of the body as a whole. We commit to considering one another's needs before our own and to look beyond self to our corporate identity in Christ (*Romans 12.10, Ephesians 5.19-21, Philippians 2.2-3, Colossians 3.12-17, Hebrews 10.23-25*).

8. **We believe** that the word of God is the best means of knowing and being able to declare truths about God in worship (*Psalms 138.2, 2 Peter 1.21*). God has revealed himself and his glorious deeds through inspired scripture (*Psalms 56.4*). We respond to God's self-revelation in his word in worship (*Psalms 56.4, 138.2, 150.2*). Therefore, we will hold the word of God as central in our worship. That is, we will read the word publically, pray according to the word, hear the word preached, sing songs according to God's revelation in scripture, be obedient to the word in the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper as acts of worship, be obedient to the word in receiving financial gifts as an act of worship, and allow the word of God to provide the context and motivation for our worship and to enrich and inform our worship.

9. **We believe** that there is freedom in style in worship. We believe this for the following reasons: 1) God exists in a triune community – the ultimate expression of unity in diversity (*Genesis 1.26, Mark 1.9-11*). 2) The church is itself blended – it is composed of people from all races, nationalities, ages, backgrounds and temperaments (*Galatians 3.28*). 3) God loves diversity – this is seen in his works of creation and in the world of people he has made (*Ephesians 5.18-19, Revelation 5.9-10, 7.9-10*). 4) The New Testament does not prescribe a particular form or style for worship in the church. This absence of detailed guidelines suggests that God allows for considerable freedom in worship style (*John 4.23*). We further believe, however, that Christians are not to do that which God forbids in the name of worship or freedom (*Deuteronomy 12.4, Exodus 20.4-6, 1 Corinthians 10.14-22*). Therefore, we commit to draw from a diversity of stylistic influences from within and outside the church while maintaining obedience to scripture.

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