

## Worship Development

## 12 LITURGY

Think about the shape of the last service you were present at, or the usual shape of the services you lead.

### Reading

Philippians 4. 4-9 & Ephesians 5. 18b-20

Read aloud then allow time for everyone to re-read it for themselves along with the comment and Personal Focus questions- and reflect alone.

### Comment

From "Reclaiming liturgical worship" by Andrew Lyons in Epworth Review Jan 2005, a response to an earlier article by David Blackley... "Methodist worship seems to be suffering from a lack of identity and confidence. In a survey by Adrian Burdon 65% of ministers questioned agreed that Methodist worship is often dull. Blackley's article was dominated by the sermon with no comment on prayer, or on the use of creeds or affirmations of faith or on the shape of worship. Before we can begin to discuss the benefits of style or substance we must identify what we are doing and trying to achieve. We need to ask what expectations and hope we have, for our willingness to engage ourselves in worship, our willingness to change and our willingness to be changed by worship will all impact on our assumptions and expectations of worship.... Can we be bold enough to believe that worship is a transformative experience?" Elaine Ramshaw offers us this hope, ...the liturgy is God's gift to us: and activity God ordains out of a knowledge of our needs that runs deeper even than our self-knowledge. We therefore need not feel guilty that we can get something out of a good liturgy-indeed its very purpose is to transform us to be agents of change ourselves...

In 1999 Methodism published the Methodist Worship Book. In its preface is the statement: 'it is hoped that its rich and comprehensive nature will help to enhance and renew the worship of the Methodist people'. Study of the non-Communion services pp26-59 reveals service orders and contents that challenge traditional 'preaching' services. It challenges the current practice/shape of these services. The inclusion of a prayer of thanksgiving after the Ministry of the Word is not something that most services include. The 1975 Methodist Service Book adopted a method of highlighting the eucharistic nature of weekly worship, even when the Lord's Supper is not held. As A Raymond George has written "Preachers generally seem not to have grasped the concept of a dry anaphora" (a remembering and rehearsing of what God has done for us).

"When the Lord's Supper is not actually celebrated all that it points to must breathe through our worship. Worship should be seen as a sacred drama and all worship should be eucharistic". Unit 7 Faith & Worship

### Personal Focus Questions

1. What thoughts come to mind as you read the Bible passage and the comment? What might God be saying to you?
2. How much of a eucharistic event (with thanksgiving at its heart) are the services at your church/that you lead?
3. How much use of silence is there? How much participation?
4. Do you feel transformed by the worship you share in?
5. Do you feel you go out from worship to be an agent of change in God's world?
6. Look at the Methodist Worship book orders (preferably) pp26-59 or Methodist Service Book Orders pB18-39. What do you make of them?

Share ideas in threes, then return together as a group and share insights. Now share together in these applications.

### Application

1. In what ways can we help "shape" worship to make it meaningful?
2. Consider using an order and planning such a service as a group and obtaining feedback.
3. Plan a service with more participation by the whole congregation.
4. In what ways can you make worship more of that sacred drama it should be and ensure it is a eucharistic event?

### Review

As an individual how will you use the ideas you have heard in this session?

### Follow Up

If you would like to develop any of these ideas further in a workshop contact Chris Humble (01472 877644)

### Worship

End with a time of worship that gives thanks for what God has done.