

## Introduction

? What does Scripture say about loving God in relation to others?



1 John 5:20-21; 1 John 4:12

We were not made to worship God in isolation. At the completion of the perfect creation, the only thing that God regarded to be 'not good' was the fact that man was alone.

Companionship and community are part of our design, and no one will come close to the Great Commandment who dismisses the importance of worshipping God among, and through other people. God does not save us in groups; he saves us individually. Nevertheless, when he does so, he saves us to be part of groups, to be joined to communities that, when rightly participated in, will take us much further in knowing and loving God than we could ever have achieved on our own.

C.S. Lewis wrote that "it is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates his presence to men. It is not of course the only way. But for many people at many times the 'fair beauty of the Lord' is revealed chiefly or only while they worship Him together.

The successor to John Owen, David Clarkson, preached a sermon, Public Worship to be Preferred Before Private. In it, he gave twelve reasons why worship in the gathered assembly of God's people was superior to the private devotions of the individual Christian.

1. The Lord is more glorified by public worship than private.
2. There is more of the Lord's presence in public worship than in private.
3. God manifests himself more clearly in public worship than in private.
4. There is more spiritual advantage in the use of public worship.

5. Public worship is more edifying than private.
6. Public worship is a better security against apostasy than private.
7. The Lord works his greatest works in public worship.
8. Public worship is the nearest resemblance of heaven.
9. The most renowned servants of God have preferred public worship before private.
10. Public worship is the best means for procuring the greatest mercies, and preventing and removing the greatest judgments.
11. The precious blood of Christ is most interested in public worship.
12. The promises of God are given more to public worship than to private.



? What images describe the church as a worshipping group?



1 Pet. 2:4-5, 9

We are stones in a Temple, we are priests chosen to praise.



? How are we to worship?

The commandments of the New Testament must regulate our worship. The church is a New Testament entity, so we look to its commands, particularly from the epistles, to determine what we are permitted to do in corporate worship.



? What does it command?

We are to gather. "when you come together as a church," (1 Cor. 11:18)

1. We are to read the Word (1 Tim. 4:13)
2. We are to preach the Word. (2 Tim. 4:2)
3. We are to pray. (1 Tim. 2:1, 8)
4. We are to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. (Col. 3:16)
5. We are to observe the ordinances. (1 Cor. 11:26)
6. We are to collect gifts for the ministry to the saints. (1 Cor. 16:2)