

## Perspectives and Suggestions for Worshipping at Home

I get it. There is a natural tendency for members of the Lord's body toward *collective* worship. After all, "*the body is not one member, but many,*" 1Corinthians 12:14. Us "little toes" are dependent upon not only the Head, but the rest of the body as well. Thus, we enjoy not only *being with* but also *worshipping with* the other members of the local body of Christ (cf. 1Corinthians 12:12-27). We all want to praise, honor, and commune with our glorious *Head*, Jesus the Christ. But we just can't do so *physically together* right now. While commanded to "*love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,*" we are also commanded to "*love your neighbor as yourself,*" Matthew 22:36-40. In my opinion- whatever you consider such to be worth, worshipping at home "*is good in view of the present distress*" (cp. 1Corinthians 7:26), and seems to be the best way to fulfill both of these "*great and foremost*" commands. Remember, Jesus also said, "*I desire compassion and not sacrifice*" (Matthew 9:13), and Paul urged that we "*have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men*" (2Corinthians 8:21).

Given all of the above, perhaps it is prudent to provide some perspectives on and suggestions for worshipping at home, since most of us are sailing into uncharted waters in this regard. But please understand that I'm offering what follows as my own personal perspectives and suggestions to make the most of a difficult situation as we endeavor to worship God at home until such time that we can enjoy coming together *physically* rather than *virtually* "*as a church*" again...

- **Remember that the *place* of worship may have necessarily changed, but the *purpose* of worship has not.** God is still eminently holy, and occasions to specifically glorify Him and commemorate His Son should still manifest reverence. If we've rightly maintained that worship is a *privilege* to be engaged in with sobriety, reverence, and respect, then don't allow your worship at home to be anything less. Though we definitely receive benefits from it, true "worship" has never been about "us"- it is about "Him." **Suggestion:** Get up, get dressed, and get **prepared** as you would when "going" to worship normally. Such will be tangible clues to remember worship's true purpose and to maintain the dignity, reverence, and respect its Object deserves.
- **Minimize as many distractions as possible.** One unique advantage that buildings dedicated to worship have is that they are specifically designed, built, and maintained to *promote* undistracted worship. They, in this way, help us to maintain our focus on what we're doing when we "*come together as a church*" (1 Corinthians 11:18). Obviously, under normal circumstances we don't "live" where we worship. But now is definitely NOT a normal circumstance. **Suggestion:** Give some thought to which *place* in your home (or wherever it is that you decide to worship) is most conducive to what you're trying to accomplish. Perhaps a little *preparation* can even be made that will enable the *place* to more helpful to the *purpose* of your efforts. Turning off phones and devices and minimizing other distractions (closing doors/blinds, moving pets to different rooms, etc.) will also help.

- **The *people* may have also changed, but the *Person (God)* that is being worshipped has not.** Worship is about *Him*, not us. We must guard against the temptation to make worshipping at home about us. Our comfort, ease, pleasures, and preferences are not really the point. Though at home, we still “*must worship in spirit and truth,*” John 4:24. Think about three critical words from this text: “**worship**”- not merely *play/watch* online, we must engage with *right purpose*; “**spirit**”- not merely *going through the motions/acts*, we must engage with the *right attitude*; “**truth**”- God’s word still applies, we must engage in *right things* in the *right ways*. **Suggestion:** Utilize the lesson portion of at least one of your “home worship” services as an opportunity to remind yourself and your family of the important *purposes, attitudes, and acts* of worship that God’s word provides, and how it regulates them. Then explain that just because we are worshipping at home, doesn’t mean that we are free to worship however we please. God’s word *specifies* and *regulates* worship, and those don’t change because the location does.
- **Have a set time to begin “worship.”** Obviously, “*the first day of the week*” (Acts 20:7) is the right *day* to worship, but the *time of day* is up to each local congregation normally... but now the *time* is up to each individual or household. However, our internal clocks are accustomed to doing certain things at specific times. The *present distress* has necessarily altered many of our routines, but perhaps retaining the schedules as much as possible will help to keep us on track. **Suggestion:** Maintaining your “usual” worship time might help you to do so “*in spirit and truth,*” even though the *place* and *people* with whom you do so has changed.

Worship that is “*in spirit and truth*” is special whether it is done *collectively* under “normal” conditions, or in the *home* during this present distress. While perhaps many will never take toilet paper for granted again after “normal” conditions resume, may those who “*wait on the Lord*” never take *coming “together as a church”* to worship our God and edify and encourage one another for granted again. David, Israel’s second king, taught us that it is indeed a great privilege to “*go to the house of the Lord*” to worship Him. Perhaps these few perspectives and suggestions will help you to better worship in your house until such time that we can again join with our brethren to honor “*the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,*” 1Timothy 6:15.

May God bless and keep you in His love. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org); email to [mrpcstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:mrpcstrong@hotmail.com))