

### Prayer List

Wallace  
Sheila  
Ophelia  
Josh  
Daniel  
Olene

### Services:

#### Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.  
Assembly 9:50 a.m.  
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

# *Pinole Tidings*

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## **True Worship**

When I was growing up, my family went camping every summer. For a city boy from Houston, that mostly meant a week without television and computer games. But I came to appreciate the simple sounds and sights of nature, the kind that didn't need electricity or other manmade invention for their enjoyment. The stars shined brighter and in greater numbers than they did above the city lights. The crickets chirped and the frogs croaked without the interruption of a plane flying overhead or a car passing by. These remain special memories of the Lord's handiwork telling of the glory of their Maker.

Man, the crown of God's creation, has an even higher privilege of praise. Birds sing because they don't know how to behave any differently. We *choose* to offer up worship to God. Stars shine because they have been programmed to do so. We *choose* to pray to the Father of lights. The challenge comes in making certain that our worship is as pleasing to Him as the rest of the hymns of creation.

### Elders:

Brad Behrens - [bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com)  
Michael Odom - [MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com)  
Ernie Sprinkel - [preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com)

### This Week's Question:

Who rebuilt Ramah in order to keep people from entering or leaving Judah?

### Answer To Last Week's Question:

Edom - Ezekiel 35:1-7

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Public worship is an activity in which we participate week after week. But how can we make sure it is *true* worship?

**True worship originates in the heart.** Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah when He told the Pharisees, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me” (Matt. 15:8). By elevating their traditions over the inspired doctrine, they had made their worship vain and empty. That is, it was not pleasing to God because it did not flow from an honest, thankful heart.

Worship can easily turn into something done out of habit or rote expression. Since we do take part in it so often, we have to constantly keep from “going through the motions.” And this can happen in subtle ways. When we give more concentration to the mechanics of a song than the words sung or think more about lunch after services than we do the Lord’s Supper, we have to wonder if our heart is far away from where it should be. If it is, true worship has ceased.

**True worship reaches to the throne of God.** The Psalmist leaves no doubt as to where our praise ought to be directed. “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name...for great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised” (Psa. 96:1-2,4). God is to be the center of every worship service. It is He who is worthy of all our soul’s adoration. It is He who makes us worthy to worship Him.

When worship turns into entertainment, the aim is no longer to please the Object of the worship but the appetites of the worshipers. Whether they’re old songs or new songs we’re singing, we need to first make certain they are songs that are pleasing to the Lord’s ears. Whether they’re short sermons or long sermons, the goal

ought to be that God is glorified by the truth being preached. Worship that must meet my preferences and fit my tastes is not all about Him; it’s a hymn to me.

**True worship profits those who prepare for it.** In Nehemiah 8, when the people of Israel gathered to hear the reading of the Law, Ezra the scribe stood “at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose” (8:4). They didn’t wait until everyone had assembled to haphazardly throw something together. Such unpreparedness would have been disrespectful and distracting to the occasion. They purposed well in advance to make ready what was needed so they could truly worship at the appropriate time.

Many would be embarrassed to arrive at someone’s home without a gift or token of affection. Yet we will come to the house of the Lord empty handed and expect to leave having “gotten something” out of the service. When little or no personal investment is put in, can we really expect to gain much? And perhaps preparing for Sunday morning begins with cutting the activities shorter on Saturday night. Reading the Bible and saving the morning paper until after services would certainly help with eliminating the thoughts of the world. The first day of the week is worthy of our first-rate preparation.

“Oft we come together, oft we sing and pray.” But just because we do these things often does not take away our responsibility to see that they are done in spirit and truth. “For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers” (John 4:23).

Bubba Garner