

All Things Are Ready

Last Saturday evening as I was selecting songs to lead for the Sunday morning worship service the first song I found when I opened the song book was *All Things Are Ready*. For a while I contemplated making this invitation song an opening song for the service, but then I thought this might be disruptive. The reasoning behind my thinking was that all things are ready. As we begin a worship service various people have completed tasks to prepare this time of worship to God. Just like in the Old Testament the Priests had many functions to perform in the temple and had to have everything prepared we have people who have made preparations so our worship to God is conducted in a proper, respectful, non-disruptive way and that God is worshiped as He has commanded. God hasn't laid down any formal structure for our worship service, as He did in the Old Testament for the Jews however the service still is expected to have basic elements and it is to be orderly. In 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 the inspired Apostle Paul speaks to the church at Corinth about order in church meetings. He speaks of the confusion created by members speaking out of turn and in 1 Corinthians 14:40 Paul concludes by saying, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

When we sing songs, when in the service we partake of the Lord's Supper, at what particular time we say prayers is all at the option of the leaders of the local congregation. We as Christians are free to meet together at anytime, worship at anytime, pray at anytime, and sing songs of praise to God and to edify ourselves and each other at anytime, however we are not free to partake of two critical functions of the church at anytime, they are partaking of the Lord's Supper and Laying by in store.

Ephesians 5:24 and other verses tell us that the church is subject to Christ. We are the church therefore we are subject to Christ and His will. We read in Matthew 26:26-29 that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the night in which He was betrayed and in Acts 20:7 we read that Christians in the early church observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Sunday). The early churches also were told to "Lay by in store" (Giving) on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Hebrews 10:25 tells us that this was also a time for "Exhorting one another". No other time is mentioned for these two functions of the Lord's church therefore we meet every Lord's Day to complete these key elements of being Christians.

For all things to be ready for the worship to be conducted in proper order in the Lord's church the local leaders must establish a general order of when various parts of worship are conducted. Someone must then make assignment rosters so those participating in leading the service are aware of their responsibilities and be prepared. Song leaders must select songs they will lead and make them self familiar with the song. Those reading scripture during worship must pre-read the scripture and be familiar with difficult words. Those men who are to lead prayers need to think about what they are about to pray for and Who they are about to pray to. The Lord's Supper needs to be prepared by having the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine available and then set up for the worship service. Men that are to give the Lord's Supper and the Offering talks need to prepare ahead of time what they will speak about. Then of course the preacher is the person who spends the most time preparing for the worship service. The preacher will decide what he will preach on and how he will say it. The preacher may spend hours, weeks, or longer preparing any particular lesson, or series of lessons. He will spend countless hours

studying God's word to make sure he is only preaching the truth and depending on his skills or experience he may spend hours rehearsing his sermon.

There are other functions that lead to all things being ready for worship, such as paying bills so we have a location to assemble and probably some that I have missed. After saying all this about All Things Being Ready I have to ask, Are you ready? There is a lot of preparation that happens before a worship service, how have you prepared to serve God when you attend? Have you determined in your heart before time how much you will contribute to the Lord's work? Are you ready to give it with a cheerful heart? Have you worked at putting away the cares of the world while you were en route to worship? Did you prepare even before that by planning your Saturday night activity so you were alert for worshipping God on Sunday morning? Did you prepare so you could leave home to be at worship enough before it started that you were seated and composed enough to begin worship?

These are just some things to consider in our life when we think about worshipping God. All other things are usually ready, are you?