

Our pattern (or order) for Biblical worship should come from Exodus 24 and 32, Nehemiah 8, Isaiah 6, and Revelation 4 and 22. The worship pattern is four-fold with a gathering, proclamation of the Word, a response, and a dismissal. At Good Shepherd, our order of worship uses the subtitles:

Enter God's House with Praise
Be Shaped by God's Word
Respond to God's Word
Share God's Grace with the World

Beginning in Exodus 24, God gave instructions to enter his presence in an attitude of worship. He then proclaimed the "Lord's words and laws" and the people responded with agreement. The next day Moses responded to these holy moments by building an altar and making an offering to God. The leaders went to God on the mountain and shared a meal together. Later in Chapter 32, Moses left the presence of God and took the laws and instructions to the Israelites who had fallen into great sin.

In Nehemiah 8, the people gathered "as one in the square before the Water Gate." There they heard the Word of God proclaimed and the Levites offered "meaning" to what the people heard. After hearing the Word the gathered crowd responded with "amen." Next they feasted together on "choice food and sweet drinks." After the meal they were sent out to share food with those who had prepared nothing.

In Isaiah 6, seraphim entered the temple with humility while singing praises to God. Then Isaiah confessed that he was "a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." After his confession, he was pardoned with the hot coal touching his lips and being told by God "your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Rid of guilt, Isaiah responded to God's call saying, "Here am I. Send me!" and he was sent out with a message to proclaim to the world.

In Revelation 4 and 22, John envisioned Jesus welcoming him to worship in the heavenly court. John is in the Spirit and experiences the radiance of God and Christ. There the angels and archangels and all the saints offer never-ending praises to God. The end of Revelation offers acknowledgement that Christ sent out his angel, gifts John with this incredible prophecy, and invites all to come in worship and "Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes the free gift of the water of life."

In all of these passages we enter a holy space to gather in worship, we hear and experience God and his Word, we respond with acts of praise, and we depart with a charge to invite, preach, help, and love. This is a rich rhythm of worship – far deeper than three songs, a sermon, and a closing song. Not once in these passages did anyone say something like "we haven't sung the Gloria Patri in a while, so let's toss it in this week." There's an intentionality to worship God as instructed and invited by God.