

Weekly Newsletter: 8th November 2022

Reflection: Four Ways to Make the Most of Sunday Morning Worship

By Joe Barnard

There's an old hymn that says, 'Sometimes a light surprises a Christian while he sings'. The word 'sometimes' needs to be highlighted. The hymn-writer is being honest in using the word. The truth is that, more often than not, church services are a ho-hum experience. Sermons are *not* infrequently uninspiring. The music is never to everyone's taste. The public prayers are longwinded, abstract, and difficult to follow. Thus it is truly a 'surprise' when a jolt of joy rocks the heart on a Sunday morning. Such experiences are special and occasional gifts of the Holy Spirit. We ought to rejoice when worship thrills the heart, but we cannot expect every Sunday to be a Mount Tabor experience.

Yet, if we cannot manufacture joy, there are ways of being more engaged with a worship service. Too many people step into a church building on Sunday thinking that their role in what is about to happen is little more than that of a spectator. They are the audience, the pastor is the performer. When we adopt this mindset, we set ourselves up for distraction and boredom. A better approach to gathered worship is to view ourselves as having a critical role in a drama about to unfold. The more we view ourselves as a participant in an interactive event – one that involves human beings, angels, and most importantly, *God* – the more immersive and interpersonal our act of worship will be.

But what does this look like in practice? Here are four tips for making the most of a Sunday morning worship service.

1 – If You Struggle to Pay Attention, Don't Sit on the Back Row

As a child, I always tried to get a desk at the back of a classroom. My motive was not admirable. I was more interested in doodling than taking notes.

We all know from experience that paying attention increases in difficulty the further we sit from a speaker. Some of us would benefit from making use of this wisdom. Do you struggle with being distracted during worship? If so, take a seat nearer the front of the congregation. There is a helpful pressure to pay attention when you feel as if the teacher – or pastor – can see you.

2 – Sing As If the Angels Are Listening

We often think that our enjoyment of praise is totally dependent upon the music. If we like the tune of a song, our soul ignites in worship; if the music is not to taste, the flame never catches.

Yet, if we are honest, there is another reason why praise often feels flat. A lot of us hold back from singing. We murmur the words under our breath because we are afraid lest someone should hear us. Now if we want praise to be enthralling, we need to take a different approach. Rather than trying to keep our voice from being heard, we need to lift our voices so that – not just the angels – but the Lord Jesus can hear them. We all need to know the following principle of corporate worship: The more liberated the tongue is to sing loudly to Jesus, the more liberated the heart will be to experience the joy of communion with God.

3 – Imagine the Throne of Grace during Public Prayer

Let me be completely honest: it's difficult to follow a public prayer. Most of us lose concentration at the first word of such a prayer. As soon as the pastor says, 'Let's bow our heads to pray', the mind is off like a hound chasing a rabbit in the bushes.

How can we avoid this? Here is a tip: At the start of a public prayer, pause for a moment and reflect on the marvel of what is about to happen. For the next few minutes, 100 or more hearts are going to be knitted together in a spirit of devotion and petition before the Throne of Grace. As you shut your eyes and clasp your hands, picture the veil between the congregation and the glorious throne of God being removed. Awareness of divine glory changes the entire atmosphere of public prayer. Instead of feeling as if you are listening to a soliloquy, you will feel as if you are awaiting the answer of a heavenly Father.

4 – Bring a Bible and Keep It Open during the Sermon

If you take a tour at a museum, the tour guide will say a lot of interesting things about various artifacts of history and of art. Yet, imagine how strange it would be to listen to all of the commentary without ever looking at the objects that are being described. Strangely, this is the approach of a lot of Christians on Sunday mornings. They spend the entire sermon looking up at the preacher without ever looking down at their Bibles. This mindset is flawed. The purpose of the sermon is not ultimately to listen to the commentary of man, but to understand and appreciate the Word of God. In light of this, the best way to listen to a sermon is with an open Bible and an active mind. Mentally, be asking questions while the preacher is preaching: 'Why are you telling me this?' 'Where is this found in the text?' 'What are the implications of this truth for my life?' The more actively we listen, the more engaged we will be.

Mission Prayer Meeting – Saturday 12th November

Our next Mission Prayer Meeting will take place this Saturday (12th November) at 9am on Zoom. It's a great opportunity to meet and pray with our missionaries. Please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevanglical.org) if you would like the Zoom codes and don't already have them.

Sunday 20th November

Next weekend, Joe is heading down to London to teach at London City Presbyterian Church, where Andy Longwe is the pastor. We're looking forward to having Craig Anderson from Galashiels take our morning service. We'll have an evening service, instead of an Equip session, that Sunday and we're delighted that Bob Akroyd will be preaching.

Men's Discipleship Group

The men's group is back on this Thursday and will run until the end of November. The group will then take a break over December and January. Come along to the church at 10.30am for coffee, croissants and a time looking at God's word together.

Missional Event – Tuesday 13th December

Save the date! We're looking forward to Carols by Candlelight in Montgomery Street Park on Tuesday 13th December. It will be a great opportunity to gather the community together and more information will follow over the coming weeks.

Christmas Choir

Our Christmas Carol Service will take place in the evening on Sunday 18th December. The choir is meeting to practice after the morning services. All singers are welcome (there is no need to be able to read music), please come along even if you have never been part of the choir before. Contact Norma Shippin (shippins@sky.com) for more information.

Ladies' Breakfast – Saturday 5th November



It was a packed morning and we're looking forward to the next one...

It was great to gather the women of all ages and stages together on Saturday morning for breakfast. Norma Shippin challenged us to think about 'who is my neighbour?' from Luke 10 and we were encouraged to gaze on beauty of Jesus. It was great to hear from Hayley and Alison plugged a helpful book on Ecclesiastes '*Destiny – Learning to live by preparing to die*' by David

Tearfund Quiz – Saturday 19th November

On Saturday 19th November, churches, communities and groups from every corner of the country will take part in the Tearfund Big Quiz Night – and HEC will be joining in.

We will be running the quiz, starting at 7.30pm, in the church building. Each household can take part in 6 rounds and also hear a bit about the work Tearfund are involved in.

As we are giving to Tearfund via our Harvest Appeal we will be promoting the work of a Tearfund as part of the evening, and in the meantime encourage you to give to the Harvest Appeal.

Please let Alex or Shona MacDonald (alexmacdonaldd@googlemail.com) know if you're coming along so we have idea of numbers. Thank you!

Harvest Appeal



This Sunday will be last opportunity to give to our Harvest Appeal. The current total stands at £1907 along with the donations given directly to Tearfund. If you wish to support this work you can do so via the church bank account (details [here](#)) or in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Please clearly mark your gift "Harvest". Alternatively you can give direct to Tearfund [here](#). Thank you!

Confident Christianity Conference – Saturday 12th November

Do you find the thought of talking about Jesus to friends, neighbours, classmates or colleagues daunting? Do you sometimes find yourself thinking "what if I say something that makes God look bad?" Or wondering what happens if they raise a challenging question or objection to which you're unable to respond?



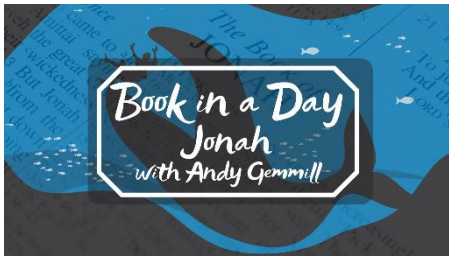
Well, you're not alone! In the fast-paced, sceptical and secular culture in which we live, most of us find evangelism a bit daunting. That's why Solas is partnering with Carrubbers Christian Centre for a Confident Christianity Conference. We will help you become confident and empowered to talk about Jesus more naturally, engage in evangelism that persuades people, and feel equipped to answer the questions of your friends.

Confident Christianity Conference – Sharing the Gospel in an Age of Tough Questions will be held on **Saturday the 12th of November 2022** from 10:00 to 4:00 (doors open at 9:30). Speakers are Andy Bannister, Susie Ford and David Nixon. For tickets and more information, go [here](#).

Christmas Ceilidh – Saturday 10th December

A poster for a Christmas Ceilidh event. The background is split into red and green sections. At the top, it says "SU Scotland". Below that, it says "Put your party gear and dancing shoes on, bring family and friends and dance the night away!". The main text is "CHRISTMAS CEILIDH A KID TO CAMP" with "20" and "22" on either side. Below that, it says "Saturday 10 December • 6:30pm-10:00pm • £5/person or £20/family" and "Snacks and drinks provided • Fun fundraising activities". At the bottom, it says "St John's Colinton Mains Church, 221 Oxgangs Road North, Edinburgh EH13 9ED" and "For further information and to book: suscotland.org.uk/edinburghceilidh". At the very bottom, it says "Scripture Union Scotland is registered in Scotland as a charity (no. SC011222) and as a company limited by guarantee (no. SC54297)".

Cornhill Scotland – Book in a Day



Andy Gemmill, Director of the Pastors' Training Course, will lead us through the well-known but often poorly understood **Book of Jonah** on **Thursday 1st December (9.30am to 4.30pm)** at **25 Bath Street, Glasgow**. Andy has thought about, and taught the book of Jonah over a long period and it will be a very stimulating and sharpening day as we think about this important minor prophet.

The day will be a great opportunity to learn key Bible handling skills and to grow in your understanding of the book of Jonah whilst enjoying warm fellowship with like-minded brothers and sisters. Our Book in a Day events will be really helpful for pastors, elders, women's workers, lay preachers, Bible study leaders, youth and children's workers or anyone wanting help with reading the Bible for themselves. We would love to have you with us. Booking is open [here](#).

Origin Christmas Special – Saturday 3rd December

Celebrate the season with Origin Scotland, and a host of musicians and singers in a magical evening of Christmas music in the Usher Hall on Saturday 3rd December at 7.30pm.

Free admission! Pay what you think it's worth when you book. Join Origin for this brand new Christmas experience and put the real message of Christmas at the heart - and the start- of the season.

For more information and to book, go [here](#).



Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group at 10am; Pastoral Care Team Meeting at 7.30pm
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm.
- Saturday: Mission Prayer Meeting at 9am on Zoom
- Remembrance Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Hope Explored, Choir Practice and Bible Class after the morning service
 - Home Groups



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