

PROTOCOL OF WORSHIP

A person visiting a leader of a country needs to know the protocol when approaching them. I remember when the queen of England visited America several years ago and one black lady came right up to the Queen and gave her a big hug! This was not the proper protocol that the Queen would expect to receive. However, I am sure the Queen could appreciate the ladies heart behind the unusual greeting.

In this message we will look at the standard protocol for coming into the presence of God.. Keep in mind however, that most of all, God is concerned with what is in our heart.

Enter His gates with **thanksgiving** and His courts with **praise**; give thanks to Him and praise His name. - Psalm 100:4

Thanksgiving is to remember what God has done in the past, what He is doing now and even for what He has promised to do in the future. It stimulates greater faith in God for our present circumstances. Instead of rehearsing past defeats, we are reviewing God's great victories. Psalm 136 gives thanks to God for His power displays which are an expression of His love and mercy towards us. Few people have ever faced the trials and persecution that the apostle Paul experienced, and yet he began his letters and prayers with thanksgiving!

- Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Ephesians 1:3,15; Philippians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 2 Timothy 1:3.

Paul was a grateful man and pleasing to God. God wants the same from us.

- **'Give thanks in all circumstances** for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus'. - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

(God loves our sacrifices of praise by faith and an act of our will even when we don't feel like praising)

- **'Be thankful....sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God, and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'** - Colossians 3:15-17 excerpts. (When I first moved to London to work with a church as outreach director, I noticed there was lots of litter on the sidewalks by the church. I bought a wide push broom like the one I used in the barn on our dairy farm many years before. Many days I swept the sidewalks clean as honor to God based on the scripture I had written on it - Colossians 3:17. Months later the local borough of Ealing came out with a campaign called 'Cleaning Ealing' which sought to address the dirty sidewalks etc. God had led me to take that initiative long before the local politicians did. Our Christianity is not to be only spiritual and cerebral, but also servant oriented and practical.)

- **'Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything'** - Ephesians 5:20. This does not mean to thank God for tragedies. Render things that are God's unto God but don't be deceived for God gives good gifts - James 1:16-17.

The word **'for everything'** is the Greek word *huper* (for, on behalf of) but the root = over, above. When bad things happen, we can **thank God over and above the situation** but not for it.

Reverence and Awe In the Old Testament days, God wanted Israel to know that He was a **Holy God** to be highly revered, so 90 times in the Bible God is active as a **blazing fire**. He is seen as a **consuming fire**. - Deuteronomy 4:24. In the book of Exodus, God took 7 chapters (243 verses) to state His standards, furnishings and requirements for the tabernacle (the worship place where God met with His people) The creation of the universe was explained in only 31 verses, which shows that worship was of utmost of importance to God. Israel camped around God's tabernacle in order to keep their focus on the presence and glory of God, which was in the Most Holy Place in the inner part of the tabernacle. God required higher standards for priests than for soldiers as evidenced by the age requirements. Soldiers had to be at least age 20 - Numbers 1:3, while Levites had to be at least age 25 to serve at the tabernacle (they lived near it) - Numbers 1:53; 8:24. Priests in charge of worship and the tabernacle were required to be at least age 30 and spiritually mature. Careless approaches to God were fatal - Numbers 3:4. (Today, church worship leaders should be screened more carefully for character and maturity).

'.....let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (awe / NIV), for our God is a consuming fire.'

- Hebrews 12:28b-29 NKJV

As our **High Priest, Jesus** became our sin substitute, advocate and intercessor for us due to his **shed blood** - Hebrews 10:19-22; 4:14-16; 7:25; so that we **can enter God's presence with confidence and boldness**. However, we should still come to God with great reverence and gratefulness for he has a scroll of remembrance of those who **fear and honor his name**. - Malachi 3:16; 4:1-3; 1:6-2:5. Who may ascend the hill of the and stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. - Psalm 24:3-4.

Jesus ascended that hill so we could walk in his steps.
jesusreigns.net