

**July 6, 2016**

**Question:** Is it wrong to sing during the service while the contributions are being made? (Some people say since the church service on the first day of the week has five elements: that's praying, singing, giving, Lord's supper and preaching, each one of them should be performed separately. Please help!)

**Answer:** It is certainly true that the worship of the church in the New Testament consisted of the five elements our questioner mentioned (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Further, Jesus specifically addressed the subject of acceptable worship when He said: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24). From His statement we learn that worship must be directed toward the right object (God), it must be done with the right motivation and heartfelt (in spirit), and it must be done in truth (according to the word of God - see Romans 10:17).

We have no New Testament account of a complete worship service, though, as already acknowledged, we do know exactly what constituted acceptable worship in the early church. We do not know how many hymns were sung, how many prayers were prayed, or at what point in the worship a contribution was taken up. We do know that they came together on the first day of the week (Sunday) to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), but we do not know at what point in the worship assembly the supper was observed. Therefore, there is no proscribed order for worship, though the elements of acceptable worship are clearly delineated. The order is therefore a matter of expediency.

To sing during the Lord's Supper, during a public prayer, or during preaching would certainly not be conducive with acceptable worship. It would distract from the other aspects of worship. In relationship to our contribution, it should be planned (as he purposeth in his heart - 2 Corinthians 9:7). It might be possible to sing a spiritual song or hymn while the contribution is being collected, but it is not necessary and certainly should not be done if it in any way creates strife or division in the congregation.

Further, it should be remembered that we must "let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

When in doubt, it is always best to err on the side of safety. We know what constitutes acceptable worship. We know when we are to assemble. We know what we are to do, and we know how to do it without creating any controversy. And, we must always put the welfare of the entire body before the desires of any individual or group. Our purpose must always be to "please God" and not ourselves (Galatians 1:10).