

# Worship and Edification in The Book of Common Prayer

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Amidst the confusion of contemporary practices and the diversity of opinions about why we gather, it is instructive to return to the simple models we have in *The Book of Common Prayer* and consider its profound teaching, both stated and implied, concerning worship and edification. In the three hundred and fifty years since the 1662 revision, it has taken many of us less than thirty years to ‘lose the plot’ as Anglicans in the way we ‘do church.’

The Preface to Morning and Evening Prayer puts it simply: we come together ‘to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at (God’s) hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.’

Although prayer, praise and thanksgiving are clearly expressions of worship, it is interesting to note that the word itself is not actually used here. Indeed, it is only found in the canticles set down for these daily services and in the Athanasian Creed. Again, in the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion we pray that we may perfectly love God and worthily magnify his holy name, but worship is only mentioned by name in the Commandments at the beginning and in the Gloria at the end.

Of course, further synonyms such as ‘glorify,’ ‘bless,’ ‘serve’ and ‘fear’ are used throughout the Prayer Book. But even in the baptismal services, there is no specific encouragement for those who have been baptised to engage in corporate worship. Godparents are to see that their charges ‘hear sermons,’ learn the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments and live ‘a godly and Christian life.’

## A broad view of worship

From 1549, the Catechism mentions worship along with many other obligations in outlining our duty towards God:

My duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my

strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

### Following biblical precedents

In my view, Cranmer and his successors expressed the biblical doctrine of worship perfectly. In our English Bibles, various Hebrew and Greek terms are translated ‘worship,’ including those that literally mean ‘submit’ or ‘pay homage,’ ‘serve,’ and ‘fear’ or ‘pay respect.’<sup>1</sup> The Prayer Book uses the same synonyms we find in the Bible and makes it clear that worship has a particular expression in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. This is nowhere better expressed than in Psalm 95, which is meant to be said or sung in each service of Morning Prayer:

O come let us *sing* unto the Lord: let us heartily *rejoice* in the strength of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with *thanksgiving*: and shew ourselves glad in him with *psalms* . . . O come, let us *worship*, and *fall down*: and *kneel* before the Lord our Maker.

However, the biblical writers also make it clear that true worship involves everyday expressions of faith, hope and love. In the Old Testament, sacrifice and other rituals were a God-given way of honouring and serving him, but faithfulness and obedience to his covenant demands in every sphere of life was the distinguishing mark of true religion (e.g. Exod. 18:21; Deut. 6:13-19; Isa. 1:10-17; Mal. 3:2-5).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul calls upon Christians to offer their bodies ‘as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship’ (Rom. 12:1). This ‘service’ (Gk. *latreia*) is explicitly urged ‘in view of God’s mercy’ to us in Christ. The writer of Hebrews similarly encourages us to be thankful for receiving ‘a kingdom that cannot be shaken . . . and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe’ (Heb. 12:28, Gk. *latreuōmen*, ‘let us serve’). The following verses indicate that this service involves everyday obedience, as well as praise and thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15-16).

Cranmer expressed this remarkably well in the first thanksgiving after Communion, where we are challenged to offer ourselves in association with ‘our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving’:

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee.<sup>2</sup>

A Thanksgiving for Deliverance from the Plague, or other common Sickness, was added to the Prayer Book from 1604, similarly linking praise and thanksgiving with the offering of ourselves in grateful obedience:

We offer unto thy fatherly goodness ourselves, our souls and bodies which thou hast delivered, to be a living sacrifice unto thee, always praising and magnifying thy mercies in the midst of thy Church.

Then in 1662 A General Thanksgiving was added, expressing this biblical theology of worship in remarkably succinct terms:

And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days.

### **The contemporary scene**

Given this Prayer Book perspective, it is strange that in some Anglican circles the word ‘worship’ has become such a privileged and exclusive term. It is used for church services in general (‘Are you going to worship today?’) or it is limited to praise and thanksgiving (‘Lets now have a time of worship’). Not only does this obscure the breadth of biblical teaching about worship, but it also gives a limited view of why we meet together as God’s people.

As a reaction against this, some would studiously avoid applying the term ‘worship’ to what we do in church. They argue that the New Testament rarely uses the language of worship in connection with Christian gatherings, though Acts 13:2 and 1 Corinthians 14:25 are notable exceptions. Normally, the language of edification is used, together with instructions to ‘encourage’ or ‘admonish’ one another (e.g. 1 Cor. 14:1-32; 1 Thes. 5:11-14; Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 10:24-25). This is an old debate within Protestantism, but the issues have surfaced again in some recent publications.<sup>3</sup>

Given the importance of edification as a way of describing the purpose of our gatherings, ‘is worship *primarily* what happens on Sundays when we do specific activities of singing, praying, offering, confessing, and so on? Or is worship *primarily* the way we live all of life for the honor of the Lord in such a way that Sunday gatherings are no more “worship” than any other time of the week?’<sup>4</sup>

I would argue that a ‘middle’ position is more faithful to Scripture, whereby the whole of life is viewed as the sphere of worship, but the gathered worship of the church is seen to have a distinctive function within that broader framework.<sup>5</sup> Herman Ridderbos put it like this:

However much the ‘liturgy’ must be seen as a spiritual worship of God embracing the whole of life (Rom. 12:1, 2), this does not alter the fact that the indwelling in and communion of Christ with the church have their point of concentration and special realization in its unity as assembled congregation.<sup>6</sup>

Put another way, the distinctive feature of corporate worship is the fact that we worship God as we participate in the edification of the church. So I now want to explore the way edification is explained and encouraged in the New Testament and in the Prayer Book.

## The many dimensions of edification

### New Testament teaching

Edification or ‘building’ (Gk. *oikodomē*) in Paul’s writings has been described as a metaphor for ‘founding, maintaining and advancing’ the church of Jesus Christ in his way.<sup>7</sup> In some contexts, the meaning is ‘building’ by evangelism, adding new disciples to the company of Christ’s people through the preaching of the gospel (e.g. Rom. 15:20; Eph. 2:19-22; cf. Matt. 16:18). Mostly, however, it refers to the strengthening of the church through the teaching and maturation of believers (e.g. Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 14:1-32).

The purpose of the foundational gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 is ‘to equip (God’s) people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up’ (4:12). As in 4:16, where the terminology of ‘building’ occurs again, every member of the church is to be involved in the task of edification. But they need

to be prepared for this by sound teaching and encouraged to see how they can make a contribution to the growth of the body.

In Ephesians 4:13 the ultimate purpose of these activities is outlined: ‘until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.’ One goal is described by three parallel expressions. The verb ‘reach’ may suggest a solemn meeting with Christ at his second coming, when the church finally will be conformed to his glory (Eph. 5:27; Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:29-30; Col 3:4). Christians need teachers who can lead them away from error and establish them in the truth (Eph. 4:14). Only in this way can they serve Christ effectively and reach the goal he has set for them. The growth of the church toward Christ, who is the head of the body, takes place when his people unite in confessing the truth about him with love for one another (4:15-16). Edification occurs when Christians minister to one another in word and deed, seeking to express and encourage a Christ-centred faith, hope and love.<sup>8</sup>

A careful look at Ephesians 4 reveals that the ‘horizontal’ and the ‘vertical’ aspects of Christian ministry are inter-twined. Growth *toward* Christ is made possible by Christ himself, giving the gifts and enabling the body to build itself up in love. As we teach and admonish and care for one another, Christ enables us to grow together towards the goal that he has for us, which is to be conformed to his likeness.

The terminology of edification occurs more frequently in 1 Corinthians 14 than in any other chapter of the New Testament. It is particularly significant in the argument about the relative value of prophecy over against tongues. Being ‘inspired’ is not enough: when Christians gather together words should convey meaningful truth for the benefit of all. This applies to singing and praying, as well as to prophesying.<sup>9</sup>

To pursue what is beneficial for the church is to fulfil the opening injunction of 1 Corinthians 14 to ‘follow the way of love.’ As in Ephesians 4:15-16, ‘speaking the truth in love’ is the means by which edification takes place. Since edification cannot occur unless individuals are instructed (1 Cor. 14:19) and encouraged (14:31), the apostle is concerned that the Corinthians should excel in those gifts that ‘build up of the church’ (14:12). Moreover, the very act of ministering

the truth to one another should be an exercise of love: only when a church is functioning in this way can it be said that it is being edified.

For this reason, Paul concentrates in 14:26-40 on the manner in which gifts are to be exercised in the congregation. The paragraph begins with the challenge ‘everything must be done so that the church may be built up’ and concludes with the injunction ‘everything should be done in a fit and orderly way.’ Order, and not disorder, will be a sign of the Spirit’s presence and control, since ‘God is not a God of disorder but of peace’ (v. 33).

### **Prayer Book perspectives**

In Cranmer’s original Preface, printed in the 1662 revision as ‘Concerning the Service of the Church,’ it is stated that the ancient fathers intended the whole Bible to be read over once every year in the daily offices. Their intention was

that the Clergy, and especially such as were Ministers in the congregation, should (by often reading, and meditation in God’s word) be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth; and further, that the people (by daily hearing of holy Scripture read in the Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion.

So the edification of the church was pursued by reducing the daily services to two and constructing a new lectionary to give free course to the public reading of Scripture and the saying or singing of the Psalms together. When this Preface mentions the need for the services to be in English, it asserts that, when they were in Latin, the people ‘heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind, have not been edified thereby.’ The focus here is on the edification of individuals, but clearly the wider purpose of edifying the church is also implied.

In the Holy Communion service, the policy of simplification to allow for the systematic reading of Scripture is also followed. Additionally, it is required that a sermon be preached or one of the homilies be read. The exhortations before Communion are a further attempt to edify the church in a biblical way. God’s people are to be prepared for worthy reception by taking seriously the warnings in 1 Corinthians 10-11. The exhortations include a challenge to be

reconciled to neighbours, where there has been some offence, and to be 'in love and charity' with them. Participating in the Lord's Supper with repentance, faith, and due recognition of what it means to share in the body of Christ is a way of contributing to the edification of the church.

Linked to these 'horizontal' provisions, there are prayers enabling God's people to confess their sins and be reassured of God's forgiveness. There are patterns of praise involving psalms, canticles and responsive prayer. There are affirmations of faith designed to encourage the participants in obedience and hope, and prayers for the church, the world and personal discipleship. The edification of the church proceeds as people engage with God together in these ways. Corporate worship and edification are intimately connected.

Edification also surfaces as a theme in the Preface called 'Of Ceremonies: Why Some be Abolished and Some Retained' (originally an appendix to the 1549 Prayer book). Some ancient ceremonies were abolished at the Reformation because they 'much blinded the people and obscured the glory of God.' Others were retained 'as well for a decent order in the Church (for the which they were first devised) as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the Church (as the Apostle teacheth) ought to be referred.' This Preface continues:

And although the keeping or omitting of a ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God, *Let all things be done among you*, saith Saint Paul, *in a seemly and due order*. The appointment of the which order pertaineth not to private men; therefore no man ought to take in hand, nor presume to appoint or alter any publick or common Order in Christ's Church, except he be lawfully called and authorized thereunto.

This application of 1 Corinthians 14 to the authority of lawfully appointed officers in the national church to institute or change ceremonies goes beyond the meaning of the biblical text. Paul used his apostolic authority to impose a principle of *self-regulation* on the Corinthians in the exercise of gifts and ministries in their local gatherings. The apostle was not seeking to maintain a uniform approach across a network of churches as the English Reformers were.

A common liturgy with agreed ceremonies must be pursued in another way in today's denominational structures, though biblical principles of edification should still be fundamental to the task. Modern versions of the Prayer Book have tended to provide a range of options for different services. This has been an attempt to recognise the needs of different congregations in different social and cultural contexts, while maintaining a degree of unity in diversity.

Some would argue that there is still a need for greater variety and diversification. However, the danger of fragmentation and doctrinal confusion is obvious. The challenge is to express the theology and ethos of *The Book of Common Prayer* in new ways that meet the needs of churches in a variety of circumstances. At the same time, there is value in having a more conservative version of Prayer Book services, to keep them in use and introduce new generations of Anglicans to their strengths.

## Learning from our liturgical inheritance

### What we have gained and lost

More could be said about the way the Prayer Book provides for the edification of the church. However, in the latter part of the twentieth century, several things happened to call into question the adequacy of its provisions.

#### Lay participation

First, there was a growing concern to incorporate members of congregations more fully in the conduct of church services. Amongst other things, people were encouraged to read the Bible, lead in prayer, play instruments or sing, assist with Communion, lead services and in some cases preach. In part, this resulted from reflecting on New Testament teaching about edification. In part, it was also a response to the demand of our culture for everyone to be recognised, affirmed and given a voice in the structures of society. We don't live in the stratified world of the sixteenth or seventeenth century!

The desire to have more people contributing to the edification of the church brought changes to the way services were conceived and conducted. In many places, greater informality and flexibility have accompanied changes of structure and content. Spontaneous contributions are encouraged in different ways. But there has also been a 'dumbing down' or over-simplification of services in many



places I visit. This is due in some measure to the second great concern of recent decades, which is to make church more outsider-friendly.

### Relevance

Whether it be ‘all-age services,’ ‘youth services’ or ‘seeker services,’ the trend has been to reduce the prayers, to shorten the Bible readings, sometimes including only one passage related to the sermon, to rely more on contemporary songs for praise and not use the biblical psalms, to avoid any affirmations of faith and to add other elements such as video inserts, children’s talks and contemporary issue spots.<sup>10</sup>

The decline in the use of liturgy in many Evangelical Anglican churches has been quite dramatic in the last twenty years. In Sydney, for example, many churches began to use ‘Another Order of Service for Prayer and the Hearing of God’s Word’ from *An Australian Prayer Book* (1978) in their evening services, but retained more traditional forms in the morning. Then, when young people married and had children, they moved to mid-morning services and expected something similar to be provided there. The next generation of young people did not want any liturgy at all and so evening services became almost entirely free-form. When these people moved to mid-morning services they wanted to experience the same pattern there. Prayer Book services were then mostly relegated to early Sunday mornings.<sup>11</sup>

Younger generations of clergy have emerged from this background and may have had little experience of Anglican liturgy before training for ordination. Even when training, their Sunday experience may do little to inspire any interest in using liturgy creatively and relevantly.

A significant influence in this development has been the Charismatic Movement. Although some of its teaching has been resisted, many churches have been impacted by its music and to some extent by its approach to corporate worship. People who come from this background tend to have strong views about spirituality and the relevance of liturgy. Others have adopted their views because they seem to be in touch with the concerns of contemporary culture.

Many today argue that saying set prayers together, reciting biblical psalms or creeds, and praying responsively is unnatural and unspiritual. Singing and

spontaneous prayer are regarded as being more real and uplifting expressions of worship, and more likely to appeal to outsiders. But these presumptions about spirituality need to be challenged.

The focus in this way of thinking is on self-expression and personal edification, rather than on the edification of the church. Paul's teaching about the relative value of tongues and prophecy in congregational ministry should be carefully studied in this connection. Biblical spirituality is word-based: the Holy Spirit enables us to respond to what God has revealed of himself in Scripture, using words that God himself has given us. The Reformers in the sixteenth century were influenced by biblical models in establishing patterns of prayer and praise for their churches. Of course, there is a place for self expression and creativity in Christian ministry, but Scripture is meant to be the foundation and control, for the glory of God and the edification of the church.

Put another way, we may ask how much the Bible is actually used and influences what we do when we gather together today. If Bible readings are reduced, psalms are not used, biblically informed prayers and praises are removed, and affirmations of faith based on biblical teaching are neglected, what do we have left? Songs that are only superficially biblical and spontaneous prayers that fail to express the breadth and depth of biblical spirituality?

Being outsider-friendly or making services accessible to children and young people is fine. But how do we expect people to progress in their experience of corporate worship and to grow to maturity in Christ? Some would argue that biblical preaching is sufficient to edify the church, but the Bible's teaching about edification challenges that conclusion.

Paul envisaged the possibility of unbelieving outsiders being converted when the church at Corinth was engaged in word-based ministry to one another (1 Cor. 14:22-25). Confronted by uninterpreted tongues, visitors may have concluded that the Corinthian Christians were mad. Confronted by everyone 'prophesying,' visitors may have been convicted of their sin and acknowledged the presence of the living God in the midst of his people.<sup>12</sup>

Some commentators have given undue emphasis to these verses, concluding that Paul's over-riding concern in 1 Corinthians 14 is 'missionary witness,' or that

such potential visitors to a congregation provide for Paul ‘the proper yardstick’ for estimating the value of ministries.<sup>13</sup> This perspective is reflected in the practice of trying to make everything in a church service relevant for inquirers or new believers.

But it is more accurate to say that the apostle’s over-riding concern is for the edification of the church through prayer, praise and prophesying, in the way he outlines. Consider also what is taught by Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11-21. When we minister to one another as Paul suggests, seeking to strengthen, unite and mature the church in Christ, visitors may be converted because gospel truth is being proclaimed and expressed in every aspect of the gathering.

Of course, congregations may plan to invite unbelievers or inquirers to hear the gospel on specially designed occasions. But where the focus is on making every public gathering ‘seeker friendly,’ the edification of the church in the sense of its strengthening and maturation must surely suffer. How can we move forward in this connection?

### Leadership

A third concern in growing churches has been to expand the pastoral staff, to establish new congregations meeting in the same building or ‘church plants,’ and to put one minister in charge of each congregation. Reacting against a narrow view of leadership in corporate worship, some churches have then moved to the point where ordained ministers are almost exclusively concerned with preaching and pastoral care, leaving the music team to plan and lead the singing, while those on different rosters read the Bible, lead in prayer and make other contributions.

What is often missing is effective pastoral oversight of church services by those who have been trained for this. Pastors need to give regular instruction about the purpose of the gathering and how it should be structured and led, providing feedback to those who participate in various ways. In this connection, they should teach about the biblical basis and aims of the Prayer Book, highlighting what we can learn from it for our services today. People can be enthused about liturgical patterns and set prayers when their significance is explained and they

are used creatively. Pastors should also model good leadership by regularly contributing in ways other than preaching.

Prayer and preaching go together in New Testament teaching about pastoral leadership (e.g. Acts 6:4; 20:32; 1 Tim. 2:1-7). The Protestant Reformers strongly objected to the sacrificial role that had been given to church leaders over the course of time, especially in connection with Holy Communion. They sought to recover the biblical emphasis on congregational leadership through preaching and prayer. Consequently, the liturgies they produced tended to limit the leadership of corporate worship to those who were ordained to preach.

In recent decades, the involvement of others in planning and conducting services has been an attempt to recover a more biblical balance for the edification of our churches. But when pastors abandon their responsibility to teach and model and lead in this connection, there has been a serious over-correction of the pattern we have inherited in our Prayer Book. In my experience, free-form services often lack depth and significance, with congregational involvement more limited than in traditional patterns of service. Paradoxically, simplified contemporary services can fail as a resource for edifying the church in the broad sense I have outlined above.

### **Rediscovering gospel-based patterns**

The regular services in *The Book of Common Prayer* present us with two different patterns or structures. Both provide what might be called a ‘gospel sequence,’ making it possible for fundamental gospel truths to be expressed and for God’s people to respond week by week, whatever the season or theme of the day.

#### **Morning and Evening Prayer**

In the Prayer Book services, the promise of forgiveness on the basis of Christ’s death is first given as an encouragement to repent and then as a means of affirming God’s acceptance. It is surprising that in many free-form services there is no provision for corporate confession. When a confession is included, an assurance of forgiveness is often not given. But Scripture teaches that living ‘in the light’ demands ongoing confession of sin and calling upon God to ‘forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (1 Jn. 1:5 – 2:2). And being assured of God’s mercy is a motivation for genuine repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Praise and thanksgiving are also associated with the assurance of forgiveness in the New Testament (Eph. 1:3-7; Col. 1:12-14). Such gratitude is then linked with prayer for more fruitful discipleship (Eph. 1: 17-23; Col. 1:9-11). In Morning and Evening Prayer, this sequence is found immediately after the Absolution or Remission of sins in the saying of the Lord's Prayer and the responses, and in the saying or singing of psalms together.

The public reading of Scripture is central to the structure of these services. Having been prepared to listen to God's word through prayer and praise, we listen first to a chapter from the Old Testament and then a chapter from the New Testament. Each reading is followed by the saying or singing of a psalm or biblical song, to enable an immediate response to the revelation of God's character and will.

In some churches, only short passages of Scripture are read. Often, only the passage that is to be the basis of the sermon is heard. This is sometimes justified by saying that people cannot understand too much of the Bible without explanation. But this seems to be a denial of the Spirit's ability to illuminate the minds of those who are listening. In my experience, where substantial passages from both the Old and the New Testament are carefully chosen and well read, people learn a great deal simply from listening and reflecting.

The daily offices make no provision for a sermon, but there is a long tradition of preaching at Morning and Evening Prayer when these stand alone as Sunday services. The ministry of the Word, read, taught and applied, is followed by an affirmation of faith and various intercessions for those in authority and for the needs of the community.

### Holy Communion

In 'The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion,' there is an opening prayer for the inspiration of God's Spirit, 'that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name.' The reading of the Ten Commandments provokes a repeated prayer for God's mercy and a desire for him to 'incline our hearts to keep this law.' The penitential beginning to this service involves a more extensive reflection on God's will for his people than in Morning and Evening Prayer.

After the collects, the readings from the Epistles and Gospels come together, with the Nicene Creed provided as the immediate response. Then, after the notices, the sermon or one of the homilies is given. So the ministry of the Word is given prominence in this order in a different way. The Ante-Communion concludes with the Offertory or collection and a prayer for ‘the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here in earth.’ Contributing financially and interceding for others are the immediate responses to the ministry of God’s Word.

The General Confession and Absolution have a more focused significance than in Morning and Evening Prayer. They are preceded by one or more exhortations to prepare for the Lord’s Supper by self-examination, repentance and faith. Further assurance of God’s forgiveness is given in the Comfortable Words from Scripture and then in the prayers and praises associated with Communion itself.

The Eucharistic aspect of this service begins with the invitation to ‘Lift up your hearts.’ Praise for God’s glory in creation follows (echoing Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8), with the Proper Prefaces giving seasonal attention to God’s great redemptive acts. The so-called Prayer of Humble Access provides an opportunity to express the gospel-based assertion that we come to the Lord’s Table trusting in his ‘manifold and great mercies,’ not in our own righteousness. It is the first of two prayers for effective participation in the Supper. The second is in the middle of the Prayer of Consecration:

Grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ’s holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

The second part of the words of administration emphasises the need for right reception with thanksgiving:<sup>14</sup>

Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving; Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

Thanksgiving and praise continue with the alternative prayers after Communion and the Gloria.

## Conclusion

As we continue to reflect on what worship and edification mean in the Bible, it is challenging to recall how the Prayer Book reflects biblical teaching and expresses the purpose of gathering together as the people of Christ. There are limitations to the way the edification of the church is pursued in the Prayer Book, but contemporary attempts to involve more people in the conduct of services, simplify the content, and bring a greater relevance to our gatherings can easily fall short of the pattern we have inherited.

In the Prayer Book services we have enduring models of how to express biblical theology and biblical spirituality in a liturgical way. There are other possible patterns, but the Prayer Book services should be the primary reference for Anglicans when devising contemporary services and determining how the Bible may impact our gatherings and enable us to speak to God in ways that are pleasing to him and helpful for us.<sup>15</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

1. Cf. D. G. Peterson, *Engaging with God: a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), pp. 55-74.
2. In the 1549 Prayer Book this was part of the Canon and was said before Communion. In 1552 it became a response to the grace of God received in the sacrament, thus echoing more precisely the apostle Paul's perspective in Rom. 12:1, where the basis of his appeal is 'the mercies of God.'
3. D. A. Carson (ed.), 'Worship under the Word,' in *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), p. 25, note 18, mentions several contributions to this debate. Cf. T. Payne, 'Why do we worship as we do?,' *The Briefing* 299 (2003), pp. 15-20; 'Church and worship: Some questions and answers,' *The Briefing* 301 (2003), pp. 15-18; 'The gathering: thinking afresh about church,' *The Briefing* 302 (2003), pp. 13-18.
4. T. J. Keller, 'Reformed Worship in the Global City,' in Carson (ed.), *Worship by the Book*, p. 203.
5. Cf. Peterson, *Engaging with God*, pp. 219-221. Keller, 'Reformed Worship,' pp. 204-207, espouses this view and argues that it was Calvin's position. Keller wrongly reads me as opposing it.

6. H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (ET, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 486.
7. P. Vielhauer, *Oikodomé. Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* Band 2 (Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 35; Kaiser Verlag: Munich, 1979), p. 72 (my translation). Cf. Ridderbos, *Paul*, pp. 429-486.
8. Cf. Peterson, *Engaging with God*, pp. 206-218.
9. I discuss the nature of congregational prophecy in “‘Enriched in Every Way’: Gifts and Ministries in 1 Corinthians,” in B. S. Rosner (ed.), *The Wisdom of the Cross: Exploring 1 Corinthians* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2011), pp. 134-163.
10. A defence of this approach is offered by M. Ashton with C. J. Davis, ‘Following in Cranmer’s Footsteps,’ in Carson (ed.), *Worship by the Book*, pp. 64-135.
11. Although *A Prayer Book for Australia* (1995) provided ‘A Service of Praise, Prayer and Proclamation’ and a simplified ‘Holy Communion (Third Order),’ these have been hardly used in Sydney. Even the Diocesan publication *Sunday Services: A Contemporary Liturgical Resource* (2001) has made little impact on many churches.
12. See note 9 above. The congregational prophecy envisaged in 1 Cor. 14:22-25 must have involved sharing gospel truths if unbelievers were convicted of sin and brought to repentance and faith, as suggested by Paul’s description.
13. So W. Richardson, ‘Liturgical Order and Glossalalia in 1 Corinthians 14:26c-33a,’ *NTS* 32 (1986), p. 147; E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Theology 32; London: SCM, 1961), p. 226.
14. The first part of the words of administration is a wish-prayer directed to the participants, but asking God to fulfill what is requested. This is similar in style to Paul’s ‘grace and peace to you’ (1 Thes. 1:1), which is a shortened version of ‘grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ’ (2 Thes. 1:2).
15. I explore other ways of expressing a gospel-sequence in the structure of a church service in D. G. Peterson, *Encountering God Together: Biblical Patterns for Ministry and Worship* (Nottingham: IVP, 2013), chapter 4.



The Book of Common Prayer is the foundational prayer book of the Church of England and also the name for similar books used in other churches in the Anglican Communion. It replaced the four Latin liturgical books with a single compact volume in English. First produced in 1549 it was drastically revised in 1552 and more subtly changed in 1559 and 1662. It has been substantially replaced in most churches of the Anglican Communion but it is in use in England in a few places and remains, in law, the