

Spiritual Considerations...



Selected articles designed to assist in our Bible study and Christian walk.

Dave Phillips, editor

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Worship Considerations

Dave Phillips

Worship issues have been, and I suppose always will be, a source of tension with believers in God. It does seem as though we will always take issue with what is appropriate, Biblical, and edifying to the church. Questions are very healthy. Differences of opinions can cause us to make sure that what we feel is Biblical is truly Biblical. The following article is very insightful when considering making changes in worship.

Open Letter from Nadab and Abihu

David Brassfield

David has preached with the Newalla, Okla., congregation since 1986. He and Carol have been married for almost 30 years, and they have a son, a daughter, and one grandson.

Nadab and Abihu justify changes in worship in this imaginary letter.

An open letter to the congregation of Israel from your humble servant/priests, Nadab and Abihu.

Brethren,

It is with the utmost humility that we inform you of a change of worship practices in your normal sacrificing. Be assured that we are bringing about this change only after much prayer and study.

We have recently concluded an in-depth study of the Law as delivered by our brother Moses that covered 400 days. (We might note that is ten times the length of time it took the Lord to impart this Law.)

We have decided to bring about a change in the type of fire used in worship. We are aware that there is a standing tradition of using only one source of fire, but we, as holy priests, do not feel obligated to blindly follow tradition. Numerous polls of our worshipping clientele indicate the overwhelming opinion that they do not care where we get the fire used for their sacrifices just as long as the service is conducted in a respectful and meaningful way.

We were in agreement with this growing majority, as we cannot see how a change in fire will affect anything in the least about our sacrifices. The animal is still properly cooked, the incense burned. We are of the mind that were we to secretly substitute a different fire it would be impossible for any of the worshippers to know a change had taken place.

Besides all this, we became aware of the fact that nowhere in the Law does the Lord forbid the use of what some of our detractors have referred to as "strange fire." We feel that the lack of such a restriction was meant to give us freedom. For those who disagree, we would ask you to show us any place in the Law that tells us we cannot do something the Lord has not seen fit to condemn.

We also wish to point out that the congregation of Israel is the only religious group in the known world that willingly limits itself to only one kind of fire. We have become the laughingstock of the land of Canaan and have been ridiculed openly by many groups. This "only one fire" self-righteous policy has alienated us from everyone else. We believe this change will open up many fellowship opportunities.

Now, to set the minds of some of you at ease, we will continue to offer a traditional service using the old-fashioned fire as well as this progressive service with the new fire. As a matter of fact, we may occasionally use the old fire in our progressive service for special feast days. In this way we hope that our older citizens

are still comfortable even though they dogmatically insist on a worship style which is declining and we believe to be stunting our growth.

Consider the freedom this new practice affords us! We will no longer have the expense of maintaining a constant fire in one location. This will also make it possible to appeal to a younger audience as we discover more entertaining ways to "light the fire" of our assemblies. (We hope you caught the little play on words there!)

For those who still oppose the use of new fire, we ask you not to be judgmental of new ideas. We also hope you will not use this change as a excuse to divide our people or stir up trouble within the congregation. We remind you that this has been well thought out and the majority of elders have signed on with us. It is true we have not included our father Aaron in this deliberation; but we were well aware of his tradition-bound views and still plan to leave him in charge of doing the traditional service anyway. We also have not consulted Moses, but his humility is well known and we are confident he will want to uphold the majority decision in this effort to improve our worship.

We are very much looking forward to our first new fire service. We hope you will make a special effort to be present to witness a new age of enlightenment in the church of Israel. We know God will be watching and we anticipate that his joy over seeing his people take a great step toward throwing off the burden of binding tradition will be an electrifying experience.

See you there. Bring some extra barbecue sauce, for we think this new practice is going to spread like wildfire!

For freedom's sake!

Nadab & Abihu, DDLP (Doctors of Divine Law and Progress)

P.S. After the successful changeover in this part of our worship, future plans include the ordination of women priests, inter-idol fellowship activities with the various pagan groups nearby, and a special service called, "It doesn't have to be Passover to celebrate Passover anymore."

Worship Questions

Dave Phillips

I always try to remember that discussions about Biblical issues can be very healthy. Even if we enter into a very tense discussion, it can have positive results. A couple of reminders might be helpful, though. The apostle Peter pointedly reminds believers to "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence..." (1 Peter 3:15).

Did you notice that he said that we are to sanctify, or set apart, Christ as Lord? This means that I am to hallow, revere, and obey Him above all else. As tempting as tradition, relatives, or the practice of religious groups might be, it is the Christ that is to be revered as Lord. This compels me to go to Scripture and make sure that I am making changes according to His word.

Peter also says that I am to make a defense to every one. I cannot ignore certain individuals because I have a personality difference with them. But neither does this compel me to chase them down just to argue with them. Peter said make a defense to someone who asks you. Like Nehemiah of old, I am not to seek a confrontation, but be ready to make a defense if faced directly with a challenge (Neh. 4:15ff.).

Peter also says that I am to give an account for the hope that is within me. I am to have a firm hope that is built on the word of God, resulting in confidence and faith in the work of God.

My attitude is also addressed by Peter when he tells us to give the defense with gentleness and reverence. I am reminded of the way Paul tells the churches of Galatia to handle sinners in the sixth chapter of the book of Galatians. He says to consider your own selves when dealing with them, because none of us is immune to the possibility of sin.