

Worship on the Journey

{the songs of ascent}

The Journey and Community

Psalm 133

- ¹ Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!
- ² It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!
- ³ It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore.

Psalm 134

- ¹ Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD,
who stand by night in the house of the LORD!
- ² Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the LORD!
- ³ May the LORD bless you from Zion,
he who made heaven and earth!

Both Psalm 133 and 134 fit well together, and especially as concluding psalms for the Songs of Ascent. The first psalm calls us to look around us at the community that God himself has built. As diverse as the old covenant people of God were, they were brothers dwelling together in unity. This work toward community, that God himself was doing, was both good and pleasant, something to be received, enjoyed, and celebrated. As important as community is, though, it is not the end of the road. God's design for community is that the unified people of God gather in worship, to bless him.

Introduction

Worship on the journey is no doubt an individual pursuit. God cares about each person and their journey. However, God has always been interested in building a people for the glory of his name. In that respect, worship on the journey always leads me to us, and us to him in worship together. This is his gift to us. He is building a unified community of his people that we would worship him together through all generations.

1. Look around (at your spiritual community) Psalm 133

God is always working to build his people, a spiritual family that worships him. It is his gift to us that is both good and pleasant, something we can delight in. We are not called to walk with him alone but to walk with him together.

2. Look up (in worship) Psalm 134

Community and unity is something to enjoy and celebrate. But we do not exist for community alone. We exist as a unified community that worships God. Having been blessed by God we bless him by adoring him in worship together.

1. Describe a group experience (secular or spiritual) where you were unified in some way. What brought that sense of unity? Was that experience enjoyable or not? Why?
2. Is it possible to be united around the wrong things? Have you ever experienced that?
3. Psalm 133 calls us to “look” or “behold.” It is a call to awareness, to look around and enjoy the unity that God himself is working in our community as believers. What benefits of community are you experiencing within our church family? Where is community lacking and how could it be improved? How could you be part of the solution?
4. Psalm 134 calls us again to “look” or “behold.” It is a call to awareness as well, to look up in worship as a community of believers. What can be the result of community that looks too much inward and not upward to God in worship? What does it look like for a community of believers to become too self-focused and not God-focused?
5. Worship on Sunday morning is definitely an individual experience. But it is also a community experience. How can you practically be aware of both aspects on Sunday morning?
6. What is one specific shift in how you approach our Sunday morning corporate gathering that would help you be more aware of the spiritual family you are a part of and the worship you engage in together?