

Should We Quack Like Ducks in Church?

[An article for children]

Susan Verstraete

Have you ever thought about *why* we do the things we do when we go to church? What if the next time you went to church, the song leader asked everyone to quack like ducks instead of singing worship songs? Would God be pleased if your pastor talked about his new shoes instead of preaching from God's Word? Does it matter if everyone reads from a telephone book instead of from the Bible? Would it make a difference if you all said a nursery rhyme instead of talking to God in prayer? Does God *care* how we worship Him when the church meets?



When we have questions about God, we should always go to the Bible to find the answers. In the Bible book of Leviticus God teaches us about worship with the story of two men, Nadab and Abihu.

A long time ago, God freed the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. He helped them escape from the Egyptian army by parting the Red Sea so they could cross to the other side on dry land. God told the people to camp at Mt. Sinai, where He gave Moses

the Ten Commandments and carefully explained how He wanted to be worshipped by His people.

There were rules for everything! There were rules setting apart people called priests who would serve God in a special tent, called the tabernacle. There were rules about how the priests should dress, and how they should bathe. There were rules about what kinds of animals should be offered to God, and about exactly how they should be sacrificed. There were rules about sacrifices to say "Thank You" to God, and ones to say "I'm sorry." There were rules about where all the furniture should be placed in the tabernacle and what it should look like. Most important to our story, there were rules about how the special incense should be mixed and burned by the priests.

God told the rules clearly to Moses, and Moses told the rules clearly to his brother Aaron, who was the High Priest, and to Aaron's four grown-up sons, whom God had chosen to be Aaron's helpers. Their names were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. Everyone knew *exactly* what he was supposed to do. And for a while, they carefully obeyed God's rules about worship.

But one day, Nadab and Abihu decided to do something different. Now the Bible doesn't say exactly *how* they disobeyed the rules—perhaps they experimented with the recipe for the incense or they burned it with fire from the wrong place. The Bible says, "They offered strange fire before the Lord,

which He had not commanded them" (Lev. 10:1). Immediately after they did this, fire came out from the presence of the Lord and they died. Moses remembered what God had said—"By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy" (Lev. 10:3). It was not OK to do things any old way. God cared about how the people worshipped Him.

After Jesus was born, grew up, died for the sins of His people, was brought back to life and went to live with God in Heaven, it changed the way God wants to be worshipped. We no longer offer animal sacrifices to God, because Jesus is our sacrifice. We no longer need priests, because Jesus is our High Priest. But God *still* cares how He is worshipped.

So when the leaders of your church decided what everyone should do during the worship service, they went to the Bible to find out what God's instructions were.

The Bible says we are to be "singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col.3:16), so instead of quacking like ducks in church, we sing songs about God. Singing songs is a way of telling God how much we love Him, and reminding us that He is the One we should be thinking about during worship.

The Bible says, "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2), so instead of telling you about his new shoes, your pastor always teaches you about God. Remember how Moses carefully told the priests what God wanted them to do to please Him? Your pastor is doing that for you when he preaches from God's Word.

The Bible says, "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture" (1 Tim. 3:14), so we read from the Bible, and not from the telephone book. God speaks to us directly through the Bible and teaches us how to trust Him.

The Bible says that the early church devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42), so we always pray together in church, instead of doing something silly, like saying a nursery rhyme. In prayer, we ask God to help all the people in our church to live lives that please Him, to heal the sick and to provide the things we need every day. The Bible says God always hears the prayers of His people when they gather together.

So the next time you go to church, remember, there's a good reason that no one will ask you to quack like a duck!

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