

WORSHIP

Jennifer Kinghorn

In speaking about worship I feel that I have to talk about obedience as well. I have come to decide that the whole of life is worship and obedience, and to learn how to do these properly takes a whole lifetime.

But first of all, I should talk about prayer, which is part of worship and one of the most ineffective of human activities. I think there are three reasons for this. The first is that when most of us pray, we are telling God lies because we are telling ourselves lies. The most difficult thing in life is to discover the truth about ourselves. Another reason for ineffective prayer is that much of prayer is just making speeches, and we do not listen to the reply. Thirdly, we ask God for the wrong things. We ask Him to do what *He* is asking us to do, and we try and do *ourselves*, the things that we should leave to God. I have made all these mistakes myself.

Worship is more than prayer; it includes praise, thanksgiving, confession, repentance, petition, intercession, contemplation, and service.

"To worship" means something like "to draw near with a kiss." When we worship, our attitude to God is that we draw near to Him with a kiss and if we worship Him in Truth we are meeting with the Christ Spirit. When I first opened my life to God, I did not know the Christ Spirit, but after a few years, I realised that I was speaking to and knowing the Christ Spirit.

We worship in many ways. I find that I need to worship in a group to be strengthened and to be taught—to receive strength and share wisdom. I enjoy both programmed and unprogrammed group worship. I also enjoy worshipping on my own. The only important thing is that worship be honest.

I have followed the old priest Brother Lawrence. He talked to God and listened to God while he worked for many years, peeling vegetables in a monastery kitchen. He found he was just as close to God when he was peeling vegetables as when he was worshipping God on his knees in the chapel. So I worship God in my motor car, and when I am waiting in the dentist's waiting room,

and when I am in the dentist's chair and when I am thinking about getting up in the morning. I also pray when I have to see someone whom I fear. When I am afraid, I often say, "Jesus, please go into this room ahead of me. Be there waiting for me. Prepare the heart of the person I am going to see. Tell me what to say." And my prayer is always answered. Jesus has done many wonderful things for me through the presence of the Christ Spirit.

I will now just speak about another form of worship; we approach and meet God also in service—our response to God's answers to our prayer—true service. I know that Jesus meets the individual person. He meets the sinner and the outcast and the sick, people like me, and you, and those whose hurts are even greater than ours—and he meets us at the point of our pain and our need.

When I reach out to one of my fellow countrymen at the point of her need, whether it's a big or a small need, I meet the Christ Spirit. And when I allow people to meet me in my need, I meet the Christ Spirit.

When we pray for one another, together, especially when we pray out loud, we make an opening and space for God. We make an opportunity for supernatural healing, healing from God.

In South Africa there is great pain and suffering and so we are able to experience the Christ Spirit daily. When I respond to another at her point of need, whether it is a member of the ruling government party who has need, or whether it is one of the oppressed who has need, the important thing is, at the same time as I draw near to her, to draw near to God, with a kiss.

Jennifer Kinghorn, a member of Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, has been clerk of Southern Africa Yearly Meeting and has also served Friends World Committee for Consultation as clerk of its Nominating Committee. This summary of her talk at the August 1988 FWCC Triennial Meeting in Tokyo is reprinted with her permission from Friends World News (1990/1, No. 134). It appeared earlier in the Southern Africa Quaker Newsletter.

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