

Examining Worship



Worship is more than the sum of all its parts, but those parts all have meaning and play a role in the overall experience. When visiting another house of worship, or examining your own, it can help to step back and look at the various elements present in worship and how they helped (or hindered) your ability to connect with God.

Name of church:

Date and time of service:

Describe the worship space. What type of space is this worship service held in? What types of seats does it have? What type of lighting? What is at the front or center of the room? Are there windows? Are there religious symbols anywhere? How does the space make you feel?

Describe the order of worship. What happens in worship and how long does each element last? Do you speak or just listen? How do you know what to do? Is the order printed in a bulletin or handout of any kind? Are there any books you use in the service? Are there screens? What are they used for?

Describe the music. What instruments are used? Do you find the songs easy to sing? What styles of music are represented in the service? Are the words meaningful to you?

Describe the prayers. Who prays aloud in the service? Are there different types of prayer during the service? Is the congregation invited to speak or read along? Is there time for silence? How do you feel during the times of prayer?

Describe the preaching. Who is the main speaker in the service? How long does he or she speak? Is scripture read before the sermon or throughout it? Is the sermon based on one main scripture or several? Is the message meaningful to you? Can you summarize the main idea?

Describe the rituals. Do they collect an offering? How? Do they serve communion? How? Are there any practices you have never seen before? Do you understand their meaning to that worship community? Do they feel meaningful to you?

Describe the community. What ages, races, and social groups are present? Do they interact with each other and with you before and after the service? Is there any interaction during the service? What do you sense about their faith and values from this worship experience?

What about this worship experience was similar to what you've experienced in the past?

What was different?

Was there anything that made you uncomfortable or that you strongly disliked?

What did you enjoy most or find most meaningful?

Was your understanding of and connection to God enhanced by this service? In what ways?