

ACTS OF THE URBAN PILGRIMS · A PREVIEW · WEEK 15

Six Marks of a Healthy Church

#5: Worship

Pastor Jeremy Park · October 4, 2026

Acts 2:43–47

Today marks Week 15 of our Acts of the Urban Pilgrims series. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave birth to the first church. The book of Acts tells how God took the prototype of the kingdom of God that Jesus demonstrated over three years and began to scale it up through the church. Let us step once more into the dynamic story of the Holy Spirit at work, restoring God's kingdom through the church he planted in this world.

THE MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

Belonging to a healthy church matters—even more than asking which denomination a church belongs to. Finding a healthy church is important, but so is helping to build one together.

1. Kerygma. A healthy church proclaims the gospel. Peter and the apostles declared with their own lips what they had actually witnessed of Jesus' life and works. Kerygma is not simply living out the gospel; it is speaking it aloud.

2. Didache. A healthy church builds disciples on the Scriptures—disciples formed through spiritual mentoring on the foundation of traditional theology.

3. Koinonia. A healthy church goes beyond meeting once on Sunday. Lives are woven together, and people share real time, space, and resources.

4. Diakonia. A healthy church builds itself up through the supernatural gifts the Holy Spirit gives, our natural talents, and the skills we have acquired.

Today we turn to the fifth mark of a healthy church: **worship**. *Leitourgia* (λειτουργία).

then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

— Psalm 51:19 (NIV)

This means there is worship that God accepts, and worship that he does not. **Is our church building the kind of worship God accepts? And am I a true worshiper?**

Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

— Acts 2:43-47 (NIV)

Gathered and Scattered

The believers devoted themselves to prayer, gathered daily in the temple courts, and praised God. They gathered to worship (**Gathered**). Then they scattered into their everyday lives, where, in the fellowship of koinonia, they shared meals, took communion, and worshiped as they remembered the life and works of Jesus (**Scattered**).



Who We Worship

Who is the One we worship?

The worship God accepts is not about our feelings or personal satisfaction; it is directed to the triune God. It is a time to remember who God is and what he has done, and to give him the glory he deserves.

Praise is declaring the things God has done with all our heart, strength, and devotion. It is a time to align our whole being before God the Creator, who made the entire universe; Jesus, who saved us from our sins; and the Holy Spirit, who is always with us in our daily lives and gives us power.



Obeying God's Word

Worship that obeys God's Word

Healthy worship is offered with a heart of obedience before God's Word. Before God's truth, we lay down our own thoughts and wishes and respond with obedience.

Why does body fat increase? Because intake exceeds output. So if you want to eat plenty and stay lean, the answer is to raise your basal metabolic rate.

In God's eyes, a spiritually obese church is one that knows a great deal about God but does not obey his will.

Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear: ... and have become fat and sleek. Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not seek justice. They do not promote the case of the fatherless; they do not defend the just cause of the poor.

— Jeremiah 5:21, 28 (NIV)

By contrast, an obedient church raises its faith's "basal metabolic rate," and its soul grows hungrier for God's presence and will.

The worship God accepts calls us back to the Word of God. And from that place of return, we hear the invitation of Romans 12:2:

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

— Romans 12:2 (NIV)



Renewing Our Whole Life

Worship that renews our whole selves

Through worship, God restores our weary hearts and renews our thinking and the direction of our lives.

Consider work efficiency. Efficiency does not mean never resting, and resting endlessly does not make us more productive. Efficiency comes from **quality rest** that gives us the strength to prepare for what lies ahead.

Worship is resting in God. This is the original meaning of the command to keep the Sabbath holy: on the day God rested, we rest too. After living as stewards in the world, we gather on the Lord's Day and entrust everything in our lives to God.

Sohyun has recently been learning to swim, but the harder she struggles, the more water she swallows. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28, 30). **Healthy worship lets us release the strength we have been using to grip our problems and entrust them to God's grace.** In God, body and spirit find rest.

S

Space for Intimacy with God

A place for an intimate encounter with God

The worship God accepts is one in which we gather together, yet each person meets him personally.

Ironically, however, those who lead worship or serve during it often find it hard to enter fully into God's presence.

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

— Psalm 51:17 (NIV)

Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.

— Psalm 4:3 (NIV)

H

Humble Hearts to Serve One Another

Worship that serves one another with the humble heart of Jesus

The worship God accepts leads us to humble ourselves and honor one another.

Availability, not ability. What matters more than competence is a humble attitude toward our role.

Jaehoon serves on the parking team, the video team, and the photo team, and he even plays electric guitar. I thanked him, and he told me he was the one who was grateful to be used by the church.

With the heart of Jesus, believers serve one another, fellowship in love, and build up the community.

I Igniting a Passion for God's Mission

Worship that ignites a passion for God's mission

The worship God accepts opens our hearts to God's great love for the world. We realize that the God who loves me also loves the world, and we take up the mission of sharing the gospel and loving our neighbors.

P Prepared to Live Out

Worship that prepares us to live for God

The worship God accepts flows from our gathering into everyday life.

After the benediction, I too have caught myself saying out of habit, "Today's worship is over." But that is not right. The true pattern of worship God accepts is this: **"Worship begins now."**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

— Romans 12:1 (NIV)

Our bodies are our lives.

Through worship, we prepare to go back out into the world, and we establish worship in our homes, our workplaces, and our neighborhoods. This was the rhythm of the early church: gathering and scattering.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1 In light of the seven elements of the worship God accepts, are you truly offering worship that pleases God? In which areas would you like to see worship restored?
- 2 What do you believe Urban Pilgrims Church (UPC) is called to be as a worshiping community? How do you think our worship differs from that of other churches?