

Understanding Musical Worship in Public.

The value of this study comes from seeing the difference between private and public worship and what this means to us and to Him.

Public worship inspires private worship and private worship inspires public worship but they are different.

Giving the Lord private adoration needs its own place in our lives as well as giving him adoration publically. Private adoration will reflect his individual love affair with us and ours with Him. Public worship is as a body of believers who celebrate and express our love for Him collectively. Our shared experience or revelation of Him will inspire public worship. When what I have experienced of Him resonates with what at least one other has experienced of Him, collectively we can worship and that worship becomes public.

Publically it is possible to worship Him privately or i.e. for private reasons but privately it is not possible to worship publically.

So how is this explained?

The answer is in an important point we will highlight about the dynamics of being alone or when we are with others.

For example you may have heard it said that It is possible to feel alone in the company of others? However when we are physically alone it is near impossible except to some extent through the use of television, radio or other media to feel as if we have any company. There is a conflicting difference here!

This conflicting difference is explained by an important truth and revelation we draw out here about how we were are all made by God.

God communicates with us primarily through our spirit and inner senses (heart, spirit being and soul).

People communicate with us primarily through our physical and outer senses (sight, smell, sound and touch).

Feeling alone is the result of not having an inner/spiritual connection to God. So this doesn't change even when we are physically surrounded by other people. This also doesn't change whether it is a crowded room full of people or if those connections with people are virtual, as is much the case nowadays with interaction from online social media.

On the other hand when we do have an inner connection with God except by some heavenly or angelic manifestation of hosts we will feel like no one else exists in the world but us and Him. Everyone else for a time is out of the picture and the company of others pales away.

For these conflicting reasons it is very difficult for us therefore to pay full attention to *divine contact* and *human contact* at the same time.

When we tune ourselves into our spiritual and inner senses we tune out of our physical and outer senses. Conversely when we tune into our physical or outer senses we automatically tune out of the spiritual or inner senses. Regular interchange between the inner and outer will enhance one's ability to negotiate the two but there will always be a limit to how far they can be negotiated simultaneously.

It's like we have to actually turn our aerial in whichever direction we want to receive a signal from!

Herein lies the real difference between Public and Private. There is a limit to how much of the divine we can focus on or pay attention to as human beings when we are around others. Privately however, undistracted by any needs to process human interactions, we are freed from worrying about others to fully set our sights on Him.

All scripture references are from The King James Bible version.

When Jesus was teaching the Lord's prayer He began by saying, "**when you pray enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward the openly. (Matt 6 v6)**

'Take heed' he says at the beginning of verse 1. **Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.**

Matthew:6:1

In **verse 5** Jesus talks about the influence of being seen by others and to avoid it.

Don't be as hypocrites are, they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Matt 6:5

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. Matt 6:2

'This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me,' (Mark 7 v 6-7)

We wrestle to give divine contact our full attention when we are around others therefore because we have a tendency as people to make public prayer or worship a performance, we secretly seek to impress one another or win attention and glory for ourselves for whatever reason.

We are naturally uninfluenced by this tendency when we are alone.

In the sight of others it is not as easy or as natural to be ourselves unlike in the sight of God where we know He can see straight to the heart of us anyway.

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In Revelation chapter 1 John was caught up alone in the spirit on the Island of Patmos when he was asked to write down in a book all he saw and send to the seven churches. **He was not around others** as he received these revelations which if he had been I dare say would have impacted on his ability to accurately focus on what the Spirit was showing him to convey to the seven churches.

Giving adoration and adulation is something which can evoke intimate emotion and deep feelings which are often difficult for us to reveal and express publically. So there's a place for this privately.

There is a place however for acknowledging and expressing our love for Him publically also, otherwise Jesus would not have said....

'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' Matt 10 v 32-33

So, in summary what we are actually concluding here is not a comparison as to which is better. Both public and private worship have their place in the life of the believer.

In **John 4:20** a Samaritan woman was asking Jesus about where it was best for men to conduct public worship. Jesus however switched the conversation to include discussion about private worship, less about the public location outwardly and more about the quality of the worship inwardly. Our conclusion can go no better than His!

We are not concluding private is better than public worship, they have their respective benefits. However it is worth bearing in mind that being alone affords us an opportunity to experience and express worship of a type that is free from the distracting influences our egos are subject to publically.