

FBC TODAY

U N L E A S H I N G T H E G O S P E L

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Corporate Worship – Online or On-Site?



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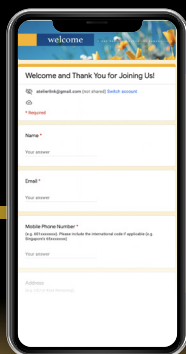
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Imagine suggesting to your parents or family members that you would like to have dinner with them but then proceed to send them a video link and say, "Let's do it over Zoom!" You assure them that you will set up everything and even send them their favorite food via Grab. It's convenient and none of you would have to spend time getting dressed and making the journey to some destination. Barring some potential

technical glitches, you figure you can converse with everyone just the same through the screen as you would in person.

While the above scenario may have been a reality for many at the height of the pandemic, it would border on the absurd to suggest that this is how we *prefer* to engage one another normally. As most restrictions have now been lifted



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and we are again free to mingle and return to our pre-pandemic way of living, it is disconcerting to find some people preferring to stay home for Sunday worship. In some Christian circles, some churches are even encouraging us to embrace worshipping online from home as the new normal. While there's a place for using technology to facilitate our worship at home when the situation is forced upon us, online worship is at best a poor substitute for the full-on in-person worship that can fill our senses in our weekly homage to our God! Let me explain why.

Firstly, the writer of Hebrews exhorts us to "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up **meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing...." The Greek word for Church, *ekklēsia*, simply means to assemble or meet together. Hebrews was a letter written to the persecuted Christians who had every reason to isolate themselves at home. Yet, the call was to come together as often as possible, risking life and limb. The early church founded in Acts 2 sets the pattern for us to continue "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." The words "continued", "together" and "one accord" all describe a divine template for God's people to gather regularly, living in purposeful association with other followers of Jesus.

Secondly, Worship is essentially about giving, not receiving. In our consumer-oriented culture, many have reduced corporate worship to primarily watching a performance and expecting to recharge their spiritual tank by invoking God's divine blessings.



Secondly, Worship is essentially about **giving**, not receiving. In our consumer-oriented culture, many have reduced corporate worship to primarily watching a performance and expecting to recharge their spiritual tank by invoking God's divine blessings. If we treat worship as simply downloading information from a sermon and getting a spiritual buzz from watching and listening to some worship songs, we are grossly missing the point. Corporate worship is not primarily about us. It's all about God and what we bring into His presence in honor of Him.

The Hebrew and Greek words that we translate as Worship have the idea of 'bowing down', 'kneeling', or 'prostrating oneself' before a superior. These are all gestures of reverence and respect that according to Jay Kim in his book *Analog Church*, "explicitly communicates a whole-body participation in reverent response to God". It's primarily the giving of ourselves to God as Paul puts it this way in Romans 8:1, "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**. In other words, our worship in general, and corporate worship in particular, should engage every faculty of our being to its fullest extent – our time, energy, resources, heart, mind, and bodies (which include all our five senses). And this is best done when we are there in the midst of the action! Not through a screen, isolated from the rest of the Body of Christ.


Coming together on the Lord's Day is a crucial part of **building up the Body of Christ**. When we come together, each of us adds to the experience of others who are present in worshipping God. We are meant to experience with all our senses the atmosphere of the worship service we jointly create.

It's participatory and our mere physical presence brings energy and vibe that add to the creation of that atmosphere. That energy, vibe, or atmosphere is what is termed by sociologist David Émile Durkheim as 'Collective Effervescence' which is the phenomenon of a large group of people coming together and simultaneously communicating the same thought and participating in the same action.

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When we sing, we are adding our voices to the FBC choir in real-time which can serve to lift the spirit of all worshippers as we praise God together. When we show up to listen attentively to the word preached, we serve to encourage the preacher that he has not labored in vain to faithfully bring God's word to his flock. When we meet with our spiritual family on Sundays, we provide opportunities for us to minister to one another through something as simple as a smile, a handshake, a cup of coffee, a word of encouragement, a listening heart, a prayer, a piece



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of advice and the list goes on. In the process, God can use us to touch someone’s life or use someone to meet a need that we have. Being a part of the Body is not being a passive recipient of “blessings” to be had, but being an **active** participant that **interacts** with the rest of the church. The best way to do that is to be on-site, not online!

Now, there is of course a place for online worship for those who have a legitimate reason to stay away like people who are sick or traveling. For them, technology offers us the “next best” way to stay connected. For example, thanks to YouTube Livestream, our brother Malcolm was able to join our worship service from Australia last Sunday. Early that morning he sent his greetings through WhatsApp to the worship team while he waited in anticipation to join the rest of us ‘in spirit’ to worship our God. Yet, I also distinctively remember him texting the group that he missed FBC! Yes, and we missed our brother too – the sight of him quietly going about his task of setting up the sound stage with the minimum of fuss each Sunday morning, a glowing testimony of his humble service which provide encouragement and a fine example to us all. His physical presence matter to all of us! Today, I continue to hear of people staying at home on the Lord’s Day for the faintest of excuses. Some

have appealed to the convenience of on-demand worship service, citing that it saves them time (and yes, even money!) and the trouble of having to travel. Some have even claimed they can now catch up on their sleep as they no longer need to get up early for an appointment which they typically have no issue keeping if it was a business meeting or a social function. Alas, such an attitude towards Corporate Worship on the Lord’s day is really saying that God and His people are not important enough for me to set aside a special time each week, to show up with other believers in order to collectively offer our worship to Him.

May I encourage all of us in FBC to once again embrace the call to meet up on the Lord’s Day not as a spectator watching on the sideline, but as a participant **witnessing** the world!

When we gather, let’s remember that we are really proclaiming to the world what the body of Christ is like in relation to God and to each other. Though the world may not believe it, we are declaring to our community the glorious existence of our God and expressing the love we have with Him and with each other. May we say with the Psalmist, “Better is one day in your courts (*at FBC*) than a thousand elsewhere (*Online*)” Psalm 84:10.



By Leong Yew Lum
Chairman of FBC



Pulpit Program

July 03, 2022

Is FBC a Safe Space Part 2: Lessons from Abraham Protesting with God

(Genesis 18:16-33)

PREACHER

Arnold Lim

July 10, 2022

Is FBC a Safe Space Part 3: Lessons from Abraham's Silence with God

(Genesis 22:1-8)

PREACHER

Arnold Lim

July 17, 2022

The Second Coming and the Parables of the Virgin

(Matthew 24:29-25:13)

PREACHER

**David & Suzanne
Adams**



Prayer Spotlight

Prayer for Malaysia

1. Godly wisdom and guidance for Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers - withstand pressure to act unjustly and out of alignment to the will of God for our nation.
2. Next general election will lead to the selection of leaders who fear God, love justice and righteousness, compassionate and detest corruption.
3. Wisdom to implement fiscal policies to benefit the population by job creation, technology transfer and creating opportunities for revitalization.
4. Courage and wisdom in Education ministry to use resources to implement policies to address equitable access, racial segregation and internet connectivity.
5. Church to be filled with boldness and wisdom to walk in God's will, in every ministry, so that the church will always be in full alignment with God.



Upcoming Events

Worship WITH US



MAIN SERVICE

| Physical & Youtube |

Sundays 8:45am



YOUTH SERVICE

| ZOOM | Sundays 9:00am



SUNDAY SCHOOL

for Ages 3-12yrs
(Preschool to std 6)
| Physical Classes | 8:45am

| Zoom | 11:15am
On Zoom til further
notice



Alpha 22

The next Alpha
program will start from
14 July 2022

Every Thursday
8:00pm

CLICK HERE to register
for the next Alpha program.



GENESIS 20

Genesis
Starting 13 July 2022
Every Wednesday

For more information,
contact the Church Office
at 03 56212623



DAILY ZOOM PRAYER MEETING

**Daily Prayer
Meeting**

Every Monday
to Thursday

9:00pm
Zoom ID: 929 735 694
Password: pray



Call office
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