

# The Importance of Corporate Worship – Week 4 of HHBC 3D

September 7, 2014

## I. Review:

We are in the fourth week of our “3D” series:

- Re-familiarizing ourselves with our church’s Mission, Vision, and Values through the lens of Matthew 22:34-40 as well as introducing the concept of “3D” (three-dimensional) church membership.
  - A “3D” member of Henderson Hills is someone who:
    - *Consistently participate in **weekend services***
    - *Consistently do life together with other Christians through **Community Groups***
    - *Consistently **serve** in and/or through one of the ministries of the church*
- Relationship between the Mission of our church and “3D” based upon the desires God gives believers to love Him, love one another, and serve from Romans 12:9-11.
- Relationship between the Vision and Values of our church and “3D” from Acts 2:42-47, and we looked at how our Vision and Values are integrated within “3D”.

1. Members consistently participate in one of the weekend services as people who value, and are being changed by, *Glorifying God, Submitting to the Authority of Scripture, and Cherishing the Local Church.*

2. Members consistently do life together in a Community Group as people who value, and are being changed by, *Doing Life Together as a Christ-Centered Community.*

3. Members consistently serve within a ministry of Henderson Hills as people who value, and are being changed by, *Living the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Serving with a Kingdom Perspective.*

## II. Corporate Worship - Discussion and Application:

Today we will be spending our time studying a passage from the book of Joel. The theme of Joel is “the Day of the Lord”, and this phrase is synonymous with God’s judgment for the unrepentant and God’s hope for the redeemed. The book begins with a word of judgment against the people of Israel, and it concludes in Joel 2:11.

### **The Importance of Corporate Worship in Our Spiritual Growth**

#### Joel 2:12-19

12 “Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. 16 Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. 17 Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ” The Lord’s Answer 18 Then the Lord was jealous for his land and took pity on his people. 19 The Lord replied to them: “I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.

#### **1. The passage begins as God’s Call on His People to Return to Him (v. 12-14):**

In verses 12 and 13, God says this directly to His people: *“Yet even now, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.”*

- Notice, too, as God calls His people to *“rend your hearts and not your garments”*. *What is the meaning of this phrase?*
- Next, Joel echoes God’s call for His people to return to Him, and communicates God’s heart in welcoming us back. He says God is *“gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.”*
- This is a beautiful picture that Joel paints of God, and it shows us that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. However, Joel still readily admits in verse 14 that God is, and will always be, a mystery to man.

**2. In order to return to Him, God Calls on His People to Gather Together to Worship (v. 15-16):**

- Notice Joe's passion in verses 15 and 16: *"Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants."*
- Joel finishes verse 16 with this analogy: *"Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber."*

**3. In the midst of gathering to worship, God Calls on His People to Pray and Repent (v. 17):**

- In verse 17 Joes calls the priests to *"weep and say, 'Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"*
- The identification of priests repenting and praying echoes the truth that through Christ's death and resurrection, every believer in Christ has been given the title of "Royal Priest" (**•1 Peter 2:9**).
- When will live in this way – using our corporate worship to return to Go through repenting and praying to Him – the world will see God at work in our lives, and they will not be able to ask the question of where our God is!

**4. God had called His people to return to Him through gathering together to worship, and they had that time to pray and repent. Thus, because they obeyed by gathering to worship, God Showed Mercy to His People (v. 18-19):**

- In reading verses 18 and 19, we see God be merciful as He removed His judgment on His people.

**III. Small Group Questions:**

1. In what way does this call from God for His people to return to Him with ALL OF THEIR HEART echo what we read in other parts of Scripture?
2. What is the meaning of the phrase "rend your hearts and not your garments"?
3. What did Joel believe about the role of corporate worship in the spiritual renewal of God's people?
4. What things tempt us away from embracing and pursuing corporate worship? Why do we sometimes not see this as an important aspect of our spiritual growth and sanctification?
5. If we were to follow the example of these priests in Joel 2:17, what are some of the ways we would be changed if we were to consistently repent from our sin and pray for God's mercy in our lives?
6. In thinking about how God showed His mercy, why does God so passionately desire us to worship Him together?
7. What does this entire passage teach us about the importance of gathering together to worship God?