

# Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshipping Community

The Church is a worshipping community. This is not simply a description of what the Church does, but of what it is. The Church exists to worship God, and everything it does is oriented towards this goal. This book, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshipping Community*, explores the theological foundations of this claim. It examines the role of liturgy in the life of the Church and how liturgy shapes our understanding of who God is, who we are, and what our relationship to God and to one another is.



## Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshipping Community by Simon Chan

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## The Nature of Liturgy

Liturgy is the public worship of the Church. It is the means by which the Church expresses its faith, offers its praise and thanksgiving to God, and receives God's grace. Liturgy is not simply a matter of words and gestures; it is a way of life. It is the way in which the Church participates in the life of God and makes known the Kingdom of God to the world.

The liturgy of the Church is rooted in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who first gathered his disciples around him to worship the Father. He is the one who taught them how to pray and how to offer sacrifice. And he is the one who instituted the sacraments, which are the central acts of Christian worship.

## **The Role of Liturgy in the Life of the Church**

Liturgy plays a vital role in the life of the Church. It is the means by which the Church:

- **Expresses its faith.** Liturgy is the way in which the Church confesses its belief in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. It is the way in which the Church proclaims the Gospel to the world.
- **Offers its praise and thanksgiving to God.** Liturgy is the way in which the Church thanks God for all his gifts, especially for the gift of salvation. It is the way in which the Church acknowledges its dependence on God and its need for his grace.
- **Receives God's grace.** Liturgy is the way in which the Church receives God's grace. It is the means by which the Church is strengthened in its faith, renewed in its hope, and transformed in its love.

## **Liturgy and the Sacraments**

The sacraments are the central acts of Christian worship. They are the means by which God gives his grace to the Church. The sacraments are:

- **Baptism:** Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the Christian faith. It is the means by which we are born again into the family of God.

- **Confirmation:** Confirmation is the sacrament of strengthening in the Christian faith. It is the means by which we are confirmed in our baptismal vows and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- **Eucharist:** The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion with Christ. It is the means by which we receive the body and blood of Christ and share in his life.
- **Penance:** Penance is the sacrament of forgiveness. It is the means by which we are reconciled to God and to one another.
- **Anointing of the Sick:** Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament of healing. It is the means by which we are strengthened in our faith and receive God's grace in times of illness.
- **Holy Free Downloads:** Holy Free Downloads is the sacrament of ordination. It is the means by which we are ordained to serve the Church as deacons, priests, or bishops.
- **Marriage:** Marriage is the sacrament of union between a man and a woman. It is the means by which we are united in love and become one flesh.

## **Liturgy and the Church's Mission**

The liturgy of the Church is not simply an end in itself. It is a means to an end. The end of the liturgy is the mission of the Church. The Church is called to be a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world. The liturgy is the means by which the Church is equipped for this mission.

Through the liturgy, the Church is formed in the image of Christ. It is conformed to his life, death, and resurrection. And it is sent forth into the world to proclaim the Gospel and to make disciples of all nations.

Liturgical theology is the study of the liturgy of the Church. It is a study of the nature of liturgy, its role in the life of the Church, and its relationship to the Church's mission. Liturgical theology is essential for understanding the Church's identity and purpose. It is also essential for equipping the Church for its mission in the world.

This book, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community*, is a comprehensive to liturgical theology. It is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to deepen their understanding of the liturgy and its role in the life of the Church.



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