

## Offering

When Al Kaline finished high school, he walked off Baltimore's sandlots to play right field for the Detroit Tigers. Without playing a day of minor league or college ball, he played right field for the Tigers like no one before. He once turned down a \$100,000 contract saying it was too much. (He signed for \$90,000.) At thirty-four, Kaline batted .379 in the 1968 World Series. Near his career's end, he was asked how he wanted to be remembered. He replied, "As a man who gave his best every day." When we come to the end of our "Christian careers," we hope that Jehovah might say, "He did his best worship for me each Sunday." God deserves the best we can offer him (cf. Genesis 4:4; 22:16).

### What Is Worship Offering?

"What did you get out of worship?" is the wrong question. "What did you give in worship?" is the question. Worship has always involved giving. Elhanah "...went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh" (1 Samuel 1:3). It was called a "sacrifice" because that was what it was -- sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> Who paid for the animal that was killed? The worshiper. The average person in those days did not lose a sheep, goat or heifer without feeling it in the pocketbook. (Remember the story of the man who left his ninety-nine sheep to search for one that was lost?) An animal sacrifice was a meaningful offering of something of value to God.

King David said to Araunah, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: **neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing.** So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver" (2 Samuel 24:24). We must ask ourselves -- how much is *my* worship costing *me*? What *real* "sacrifice" am I offering God on Sundays? This article is not just a plug to increase church contributions. This is about the bigger picture of which putting into the plate is only a part. Christians give God six offerings in true worship.

**We offer God ourselves (2 Corinthians 8:5).** Since Jesus gave himself for us, it follows that we should give him ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 6:13; 12:1-2; 14:7-9; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Timothy 4:15).

**We offer God glory:** "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name..." (1 Chronicles 16:29; cf. Psalms 29:2; Revelation 19:7). Doubtless, angels -- if they were allowed -- would coach us each service to: "Fear God, and give glory to him" (Revelation 14:7), as they do (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). We wonder if on Sunday nights Jesus ever leans over to his Father and repeats the sentiment he once expressed when he walked among us: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" (Luke 17:17-18).

**We offer God the fruit of our lips, including praise and thanksgiving in prayer:** "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Colossians 1:3; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:30). Listen to the public prayers in the services Sunday.<sup>2</sup> What percentage is spent ascribing to God greatness, worth, glory and honor? What percentage says thanks for blessings received? What percentage asks for new blessings? After tallying, examine Bible prayers and see if they did not spend more time in praise than supplication.

**We offer our songs:** "...in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12). It is hardly understandable but some Christians actually sit silently during the song service! Others seem to half-heartedly mumble some words to some songs (the ones they like). What a poor offering to make to God! Each of us is being graded on our singing -- not on voice quality, projection or hitting all the notes, but on the sincerity of our hearts and the depth of our devotion. Perhaps if we pictured ourselves on stage singing to God as a soloist sings to a president or king, we might put more into it. Let's do that Sunday!

**We offer God our attention to his Word:** "...Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 2:10). When we pray, we speak to God; when we read Scripture, God speaks to us. It is interesting that people stop in the foyer and wait for a prayer to be completed before entering the assembly, but walk right in (or get up for a drink of water) when Scripture is being read. Which is more important -- what we say to God, or what he says to us? It is true that not every speaker is interesting and not every sermon is a "homerun," but each is equally a part of offering I make to God.

**We offer God our money.** The amount written on my offering check does say something about my love for God. Actually, the amount left in the bank account says more. Two people might both give \$50 and one make a sacrifice and the other give a token. If one family's income is five thousand a month, and the other's is five hundred, then the former gives a \$50 token each week and the latter makes a \$50 sacrifice.

The word *give* is found 199 times in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> We are told to "freely give" (Matthew 10:8); "give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Matthew 19:21); "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again" (Luke 6:30); "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38); "give alms of such things as ye have" (Luke 7:41); "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke 12:33); "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35); "Every man according, as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7); and, "give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

"Bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (1 Chronicles 16:29b).

By Allen Webster