

WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE AND REFLECTION PAPER (10%)

Attend a worship service at a **Christian** church of your choice. Report and reflect on your experience; it should be helpful to refer to the bulletin or worship folder used. This analytical paper should be 5-7 pages in length.

While you may attend ANY Christian service, we urge you to make this a growth experience:

1. If you regularly attend a church and its services, consider attending a service that is different from your routine, or at a different Christian church;
2. If you are not a regular worshiper, observe a REGULAR service rather than a special occasion or seasonal service. Not all churches identify themselves as "Christian." Call and ask, or contact the instructor if you have questions about where to attend.

Most Christian churches are expected to woo and welcome visitors. Many churches have greeters and a system to welcome visitors (though some churches are not as good as others on this). There is no admission charge, and visitors are not expected to contribute money during the offering or invited to attend Holy Communion. Freely observe, but also freely sing along and speak parts that you feel comfortable with. Before going to your observation site, think about what you are seeking to discover. If possible, take notes during the service. If not, write up your summary of the observation as soon as possible while the experience is still fresh in your mind. When something catches your attention, note it; ask reflection questions of the experience, e.g.: Why is the building this way? The most important question to be answered: Who is Jesus Christ understood to be, and what is His role in this community, according to this worship service and community behaviors? Simply put, is Jesus primarily a friend, a good role model, or the Savior who suffered and dies to redeem people from eternal separation from God? Further, what is the foundation for this church's interpretation of Biblical Christianity (how Biblical and how Christian is it?).

Please use the questions below as a further guide to help shape your observation of a Christian worship service. You need NOT answer every question explicitly. Conduct this observation with a sense of openness and inquiry. Attempt to write your paper in the third person where possible, though at some point(s), your personal reflection will need to be in the first person. Ask questions of yourself and your experiences. Instead of merely observing and reporting, attempt to probe more deeply into the "culture" and "values" of the worship setting you are observing.

- What is the connection between public beliefs and practices?
- What is the nature of the church's architecture?
- What kinds of items decorate the worship space?
- How does the physical environment impact the worship experience?
- What is the ethnic, age, and gender composition of the people attending?
- Who participates, and how? What roles do the members in the church have?
- Who "leads" the public worship service?
- How does the worship leader(s) interact with the congregation?
- What kind of emotional mood is created by the worship service?
- What kind of music dominates the service?

What ritual activities were observable?

What symbols were present?

Were guides given for the worship activity (bulletins, hymnals, projection)?

What portions of Scripture were used during the service?

What references were made to Jesus during the service?

What was the central theme of the message or sermon?

What role did the scriptures play in the service?

How comfortable did you feel? Why or why not?

Use proper APA formatting; include a title page, reference page; write in third person. (Please note: page counts do not include title or reference pages. Both are expected according to APA format.)