

ON COMMUNITY WORSHIP—QUOTES FROM LUTHERAN AND
ORTHODOX THEOLOGIANS

(with one Presbyterian ringer tossed in!)

1. “Corporate worship expresses the unity of the people of God and their continuity with Christians across the ages. In the liturgical tradition are the gestures, songs, and words by which Christians have identified themselves and each other.” – Lutheran Book of Worship, Introduction, p.6.
2. “First, it is presupposed that the traveler on the way is a member of the church. The journey is undertaken in fellowship with others, not in isolation.” – Kallistos Ware, The Orthodox Way, Orthodox bishop.
3. “Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained on our part, and celebrated with the highest reverence. All the usual celebrations are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people.” – Philipp Melanchthon, The Augsburg Confession, Article 24, “Of the Mass.” Lutheran confessional document.
4. “No one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the church, as a member of her and in union with all her other members. If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves, he is in the communion of love; if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer.” – Aleksei Khomiakov, Orthodox theologian.
5. “Ignorance and sin are characteristic of isolated individuals. Only in the unity of the Church do we find these defects overcome. Man finds his true self in the Church alone; not in the helplessness of spiritual isolation but in the strength of his communion with his brothers and his Savior.” – Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, Orthodox priest.
6. “This is why the Christian goes to church. He knows that God’s word calls him back and that, in the place set apart for worship, among his friends whose demands are like his own, he will find the fire. So the Christian joins his fellows on Sundays and holy days, not out of any sense of duty, but because he knows he must have what the church offers. He is not perfect, and is conscious of his error and ready to admit it. He hears again the voice of God and in praise he expresses his thanksgiving for that voice which sets his soul afire.” – Edgar S. Brown, Living the Liturgy. Lutheran theologian.
7. “A problem blocking the way (of prayer) for many people is the idea that the spiritual life is something each person does entirely on his own—in such a view, the church is not needed and may even be an obstacle. Many people present ‘institutional Christianity’ as something the truly ‘spiritual person’ should avoid like the plague...If the same antisocial principle were applied to any other area of life, we would soon die

of the resulting radical solitude.” – *Jim Forest, Praying with Icons, Orthodox lay author.*

8. “Saint John Chrysostom referred to the Church as a ‘hospital’ where people come to wash away their sins. The Church is like an army field hospital where clergy and staff work behind the lines, providing spiritual nourishment and a place to be healed and refreshed in the faith. People enter these doors each week, tired and wounded in their daily lives, doing their best to be faithful Christians in a world that does not always encourage or reward Christian values... We are healed by praying and worshipping with others. There is a great sense of community that gives us strength when we pray and worship together in liturgy. We pray for ourselves and others and we thank God for the many blessings in our lives.” – *Fr. James W. Kordaris, Director of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Outreach and Evangelism. Published homily.*
9. “When people come together to worship, they come as God knows them, with their differences, their wildly various experiences and perspectives. And by some miracle, they sing, and listen, and pray as one... In worship, disparate people seek a unity far greater than the sum of themselves...” – *Kathleen Norris, Amazing Grace, poet, theologian, and essayist. Presbyterian.*