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May 30, 2020

AN IMPORTANT RITUAL

Rituals, such as weddings, graduations, or funerals, are ceremonies that help us to understand and assimilate significant times or changes in life. Dedications of children, baptism, family worship, and the Sabbath public worship, likewise, are important practices for those wanting to experience spiritual growth.

The Lord determined that the Sabbath should become a weekly collective ritual, a Holy Convocation (Lev. 23:3, from the Hebrew *Miqra*), which means meeting, or assembly. It indicates that He expects us to be regularly together to worship Him every Sabbath. Ellen G. White says that “communing together [on Sabbath] in regard to Christ will strengthen the soul for life’s trials and conflicts” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 322). Stressing the importance of public, nonvirtual worship in the last days, we are warned not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some” (Heb. 10:25).

And what do we do while we worship together on Sabbath? Essentially, we do four things: (1) we bring our tithes and offerings, thanking Him as the Provider; (2) we pray, talking to Him; (3) we study His word, hearing from Him; and (4) we sing, praising Him. Offering, the first element established by God

for public worship immediately after the Fall, is still key in the liturgy, as it points to Christ not only as the Provider but also as God’s Offering for the world.

Even though all the tithe and the main portion of the offerings may be given electronically, it is still very important that each family member learn to worship the Lord as their Creator, Provider, and Redeemer by bringing offerings in every public service in which they are collected. Instead of considering them merely as a formality, or even a “contribution” to the church projects and ministries, tithes and offerings are to be viewed as a way to worship God, strengthening our love and developing trust in Him.

APPEAL: After leaving your offering on the offering plate, bow your head and thank God for supplying all your needs. Ask Him to increase your faith so that you may recognize His care every time there is an income or increase.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, please accept the tithes and offerings that we bring today as a token of our desire to serve and worship you! Amen!