

12 reasons for liturgy

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1. Liturgy makes the entire gathering a rehearsal of the gospel. We acclaim God's kingdom, we confess sin on bended knee. We hear significant portions of the Bible. We confess faith. We pray for the world. We receive the embodied sign of God's grace at the table. We are sent out.

2. In an age of expressive-individualism, liturgy is especially counter-cultural (hence the discomfort). We have been told that what matters is the expression of our unique selves. Liturgy, by contrast, is a practice of *conformity* to Christ and to his people.

3. Liturgy is highly participatory and embodied, and makes space for everyone to be involved, whether they are young or old, educated or uneducated, neurotypical or not, rich or poor.

4. Liturgy de-centres the pastor and their personality and their great (or not) preaching. It can help to create a church culture that isn't a cult of personality. And this is way better for everyone (including the pastor!).

5. Liturgy is highly missional. When secular people take the leap to come to church, they are looking for something transcendent and beautiful. They hope the church can offer them something different than the disenchanted world around. Liturgy helps to provide this.

6. Liturgy can help people be carried along even in times of doubt or dryness. They may not be able to pray entirely from a place of spontaneous expression at that point, but the church prays for them and they pray with the church.

7. Liturgy is great for kids. They get to use their voices and their bodies. They end up memorising prayers and creeds that have been prayed for centuries. It is highly catechetical.

8. Liturgy helps us learn to keep time in a new way. The observance of the church's calendar helps us in a small way to order our lives not only around the financial year or our next holiday, but around the life of Christ.

9. Liturgy connects us with the church through time and around the world. When we confess the Nicene Creed, pray the Lord's Prayer, and receive the Lord's Supper, we are united with God's people throughout space and time.

10. Liturgy allows some space for contemplation, something that is sorely lacking in our contemporary society and in most of our personal lives.

11. Liturgy trains us in reverence toward a God who is holy, holy, holy, which is essential to a deeper experience of joy and wonder at who He is and what He has done for us.

12. Liturgy is not cold or stiff, but has ample space for warmth and emotional expression in the transitions you use, the way things are said, the songs you sing, etc.

Addendum: Faithful proclamation of the Bible with no liturgical element is infinitely better than the best liturgy but with no proclamation of the gospel. But why not both?