

## ***Because of its informality, "contemporary" worship encourages applause.***

I attended a Christmas Eve service a few years ago, in which every part of the service, except the sermon, was greeted with applause, including the reading of the Scripture!

When talking about applause in church, I want to be clear that I do not link anyone's relationship with God and the sincerity of their faith to whether or not they applaud. I have found applause to be an expression of praise, adoration and honor to God. But, I have found moments where applause served to stroke the ego of someone who had just done something special in worship. Who is the applause for? I say "Who" not "What" because the object of worship is not any particular act of worship led or performed by someone. The object of worship is God. If something does not point people God-ward, get rid of it. When it comes to modern day applause in worship, the object is not praising God, but praising men, such as approval for someone's performance by clapping their hands for an extended period of time; the louder and the longer the applause the more approval one shows. Why is applause in any Christian church heresy? Because applause is a sound that people make in order to send the following message: "I am pleased with your performance for me." If there is any other message conveyed by applauding, I have not seen or heard or read of it.

Worship is not about numbers. "Worship leaders" and pastors who don't understand the purpose of Worship have created confusion. Entertainment directly contradicts the biblical admonitions of Worship. Worship is for God; it is not to please ourselves with a performance, nor is worship to be used to entice the unbeliever into the church and please them with entertaining music.

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