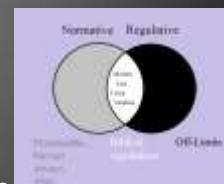


Regulative vs. Normative Principle

- How do we decide what is appropriate in church?
 - Some churches have drama, sculpture, painting, and liturgical dance. On what basis do we decide what is acceptable and unacceptable? This is the purpose of the regulative vs. normative principle argument.
- Scripture insists that the church must worship God according to the way he finds acceptable.
 - It is the Lord Himself who established His New Covenant with the church, and as Lord of the Church, He stipulates the way He desires to be worshipped.
- Historically, churches have promoted two divergent positions on the issue of acceptable worship:
 - These principles are often used to for other things too, but they were originally crafted to decide what should be included and excluded in proper worship of God.
- Let's define and apply the two positions.



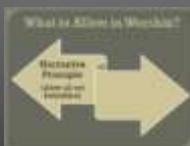
Regulative vs. Normative Principle

- Regulative Principle: Whatever is commanded in Scripture is required, and whatever is not commanded is forbidden.
 - In 1 Tim 4:13, public reading of Scripture is commanded. So we have to do this. There is no command to engage in painting what the sermon is about, so churches ruled by the regulative principle will not permit painting for this reason. Things must have explicit or implicit biblical warrant or justification for each element that the church includes in its worship of God.
- Normative Principle: This teaches the church is free to incorporate any elements into its worship unless Scripture either explicitly or implicitly prohibits them.
 - So the starting point is Christian freedom. In a Christian context, we are talking about churches traditionally ruled by Christian principles. These elements have to broadly deal with worshiping God. So it is not talking about driving a Nascar car onto the church stage.
- So let's apply the principles.

Regulative Principle of Worship

Regulative vs. Normative Principle

- We hold to the regulative principle, but this needs to be carefully defined. It's not good enough to simply say we are regulative.
 - The church has to decide what constitutes a biblical warrant? NT biblical warrant? NT + Psalms? NT + OT?
 - If your church is ruled by the regulative principle from NT only, what would your worship look like? There would be no instruments, like the Church of Christ. They are governed by the NT only regulative principle. Since there is no mention of instrumentation in the NT, they feel it is prohibitive.
 - Other churches extend the biblical warrant to the NT and Psalms, or OT, and so they see use of instruments as being okay and even commanded.
 - So just saying our church is ruled by regulative principle does not settle the matter, since you first have to decide what is settled as biblical warrant.
- And let's be fair to the normative principle.
 - It's not something that just wants to be free from rules. It was embraced by the Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church. They were articulating this principle against the Roman Catholic regulative principle. Even if we feel uneasy about the normative, we must understand it was formulated in a particular context.



Ministries of the Church

- The church worships God.
- Next, the church proclaims the Word of God.
 - Thus, it is the church of the Word. Faith comes by hearing. It is the church proclaiming.
- Historically, the preaching ministry has been considered the first mark of the church.
 - In the early Reformation, the churches were surrounded by a mass of Catholic churches. So how could people know what is a true church? Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and others formulated that there were two marks of a true church.
 - The first is they preach the Word of God.
 - The second was the sacraments or ordinances. The true church baptizes and celebrates the Lord's Supper.
 - Some Reformed Churches added church discipline. But the first mark is the preaching of the Word of God.
- According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, word (logos) of reconciliation has been given to us. The ministry of preaching is a God-given ministry.
 - Expository preaching; serial exposition of entire biblical books.



Ministries of the Church

- Next, the church engages non-Christians.
- The New Testament pattern is clear.
 - To the Jews first (Matt. 10:5-6). Jesus went to Zacchaeus. He said he is a child of Abraham. Jesus' focus was on His own people. There were a few exceptions, but the rule was that Jesus came to announce the kingdom of God to the Jews.
 - The early church followed the pattern of its Lord in evangelizing the Jews (Acts 1-11).
 - Following Jesus' own commission (Matt. 28:18-20), this pattern did not last long, as the church moved into evangelization of the Samaritans (Acts 8) and Gentiles (Acts 10-11).
- Christopher Wright: “Jesus’ earthly ministry was launched by a movement that aimed at the restoration of *Israel*. But he himself launched a movement that aimed at the ingathering of the *nations* to the new messianic people of God. The *initial impetus* for his ministry was to call Israel back to their God. The *subsequent impact* of his ministry was a new community that called the nations to faith in the God of Israel.”



Ministries of the Church

- Romans 1:16 is clear. It say the gospel is to the Jew first, and then the Greek. Was this Paul’s point only to the 1st century, or is it valid now?
 - Is my church engaging in the evangelization of our Jewish neighbors? Let’s not overlook Jewish evangelism.
- As evangelism takes place and the gospel is announced, a sobering responsibility accrues to the herald of the good news (John 20:23); yet, this is only the beginning of the mission (Matt. 28:18-20): the aim of the church’s mission is to produce fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ among all the peoples of the world.
 - So discipleship is that to which the church is called. So it is not just evangelization.
 - Also, via John 20:23, to those who reject the message, we announce the withholding of forgiveness which has dreadful and eternal consequences. That is sobering.
- Also, evangelism is to be both local and global.
 - We must engage non-Christian society.



Ministries of the Church

- Next, the church disciplines its members.
- Discipleship is a lifelong and multi-pronged intentional process: the church can never be done discipling its members, and it must adapt many resources and avenues in seeking to perform this task.
 - Christian education and community life.
 - Discipleship never ends on this side of eternity. So don't burn out.
- Next, the church cares for people.
- Galatians 6:9-10: the church cares for people, both outside and inside of it.
 - Galatians 6:9-10: the church cares for people, both outside and inside of it.
 - Gal 6:9-10 – Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up.¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.



Ministries of the Church

- There are concrete biblical ways we care for people.
 - Prayer: for government leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2); for unbelievers; for spiritual growth and maturity in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:17-19; 3:14-19; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-14); of thanksgiving to God for its members' good works (1 Thess. 1:2-3; Eph. 1:15; 2 Thess. 1:3-4; Phm 4-5).
 - Giving: the early church was an outstanding example of a generous caring ministry through giving (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; example of Barnabas, 4:36-37; counterexample of Ananias and Sapphira, 5:1-11). The church of Jerusalem, though initially able to provide for the poor in its midst, was later in dire need of outside help; various Gentile churches dedicated themselves to collecting money for its relief.
- The church is in need of a lot of teaching on the ministry and obligation of giving.



Giving & Stewardship

- 2 Corinthians 8-9 provide some important teaching concerning giving.
 - giving is a ministry of the church associated with *doxa*, or the glory of God (8:19; 9:11-13). Remember, doxological is an identity marker of the church.
 - giving is an act of submission that results from the confession of the gospel (8:9). A giving church is a gospel centered church.
 - God is a generous, giving God (9:9), and the church is likewise. We are called to imitate to God. Our imitation of God the Father means we must be giving.
 - God is a gracious God, and so the church engages in giving as an “act of grace” (8:6, 7, 19), with a dual focus
 - first, God provides grace that leads to generous giving (8:1, 2, 14; 9:8-14)
 - secondly, the church engages in this “act of grace” through human obedience and faithfulness (8:7)

Giving & Stewardship

- 2 Corinthians 8-9 insights (cont).
 - Such pursuit of excellence is fostered by regular teaching on giving; orienting new Christians to the concept and principles of stewardship; challenging maturing members to give (and live) sacrificially; budgeting and spending wisely, etc.
 - Do not assume new believers understand giving and stewardship. Many have no previous Christian framework, to know that giving is part of what the church does. Some people need concrete help with budgeting.
 - Church care through giving is appropriately referred to as “a ministry for the saints” (9:1) in that it affords “relief” (8:4) by “supplying the needs of the saints” (9:12; cf. Rom. 12:13)
 - Giving offers “proof before the churches” that the caring church’s “love is also genuine” (8:24, 8; cf. 1 John 3:17)
 - Giving achieves a certain degree of fairness (8:13-15).
 - Churches have excess give to those that have less, but one day the one with excess might be in need, and the one formerly in need might now be in excess. They can help the church that once helped them.