

Many churches don't think of engaging **Church History** when thinking through how we worship and gather together. This tool helps to encourage a practice of more biblical, historical, and theological reflection in an approach to how worship **forms us**.

The following document is laid out in a specific way. In the Old Testament the Temple had 3 "spaces": The outer courts, the inner courts and the Holy of Holies.

- **The Outer Courts** ... this space was where the people were welcomed in, confessed their sins, received forgiveness and they were washed clean in the laver.
- **The Inner Courts** ... this was where the priest alone would enter for the partaking of the lighted Word, the Table and the prayers.
- **Holy of Holies** ... this was where only the High Priest could enter once a year to pour blood on the Ark of the Covenant to pay for all the sins of the people.

God still includes these elements in Worship, though Jesus changes how we relate to these "spaces." He still welcomes us into His presence, we confess our imperfections, He affirms His forgiveness of us, and we are washed in His love. Through Jesus, and because of Jesus' work, ALL believers now have a role of meeting with God as we gather together. We together are the "priesthood" under one High Priest—Christ. We are to hear, understand, and live out the Word of God in Christ's strength; to join in His meal (Communion or Eucharist), and to approach God boldly in prayer.

Jesus now stands as our High Priest in the Holy of Holies in heaven. He made ONE sacrifice for us, and now we can approach Him, know Him, and worship Him confidently.

A form and shape pervades all the liturgical (rhythmic) developments of church history. Generally throughout church history we find that within all the Church Father's writings and documentation there is preserved some basic practices though they may bear some unfamiliar names. In most traditions, the flow of approaching the Lord, and the flow of God meeting with His people contains a Gathering Section, a Word Section, a Tabling section, and a Dismissal to Mission Section. Though this document does not attempt to "affirm" that all church traditions are correct or even useful, we by great measure can learn from those who have gone before us in order to glean their wisdom for today. These historical snippets of wisdom guard us in keeping our worship services rounded and committed to the essentials of biblical worship.

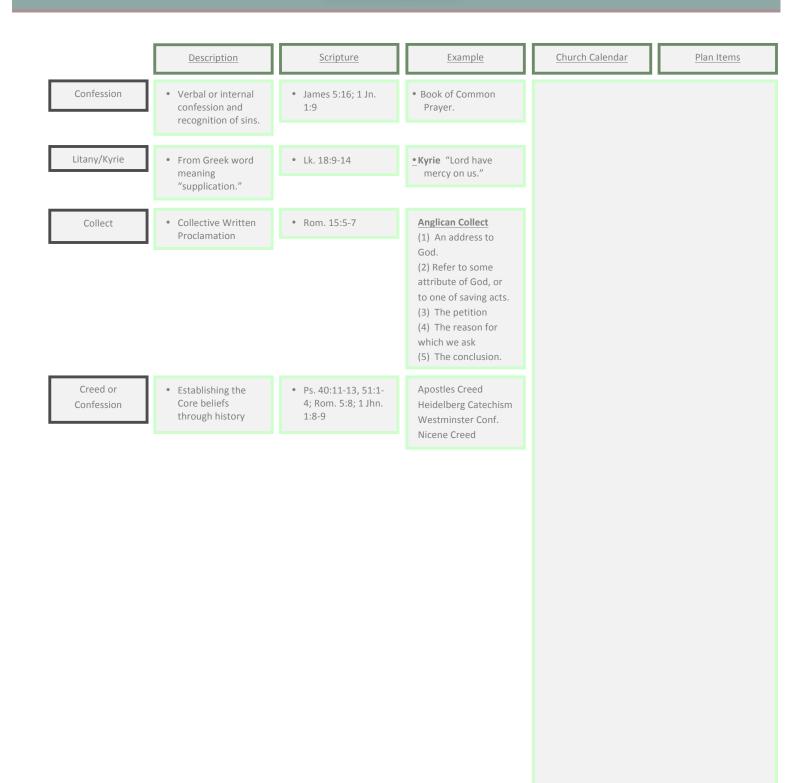
Those who engage in Christian worship, or those helping to facilitate spiritual formation in gathered worship in their local church, can use this planning guide to interact with different historical developments in the church, as well as the global church calendar. Each section gives a brief explanation of the historical elements, and a place to make notes, to plan, and to work these items creatively, beneficially, and worshipfully into the life of one's own local church gathering.

The Outer Courts

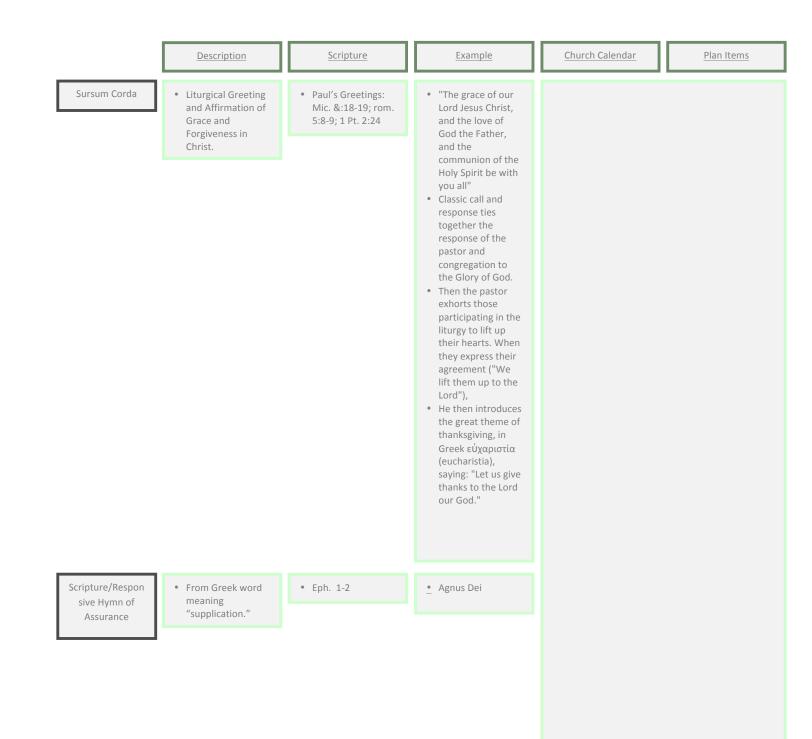
Altar

	Description	<u>Scripture</u>	Example	Church Calendar	Plan Items
Invocation	 Call to Worship and a Welcome of God's filling Spirit. 	 Eph. 5:18; Rom. 10:17; 1 Jn. 5:14- 15; Ps. 95:1-2, 100:1-4 105:1-3 	• Filled with the Spirit		
Scriptural or Extemporaneous Call to Worship	 Prayer or Scripture Reading 	 1 Th. 2:4; 2 Th. 3:18; Rm. 1:7, 2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Pt. 1:2 2 Tim. 1:2; Rev. 1:4-5 	 Prayer or Scripture Reading 		
Hymn of Praise	 Reading or Singing a Psalm. 	• Ps. 103:1-6	• All Creatures of Our God and King		
Introit	 Entrance or Ascent Read as soon as people gather to meet the Trinity in worship. 	• Ps. 20:1-9	• <u>Gloria Patri</u> Glory to the Father the Source of all being, and to the Son the Eternal Word, and to the Holy Spirit who is the Perfecter of all things, as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever.		
Sanctus	 Praise adapted from Isaiah 6:3. Introduced by the expression and desire of the community to unite itself with the heavenly Angelic liturgy. 	• Mt. 21:9	• Holy, Holy, Holy immediately followed by the Benedictus taken from Matthew 21:9.		
Antiphonal/Resp	 Typically a call and response and alleluia to the 	• Mt. 21:9	 A reading from the OT and the Gospels/NT 		

Confession



Assurance



Thanksgiving

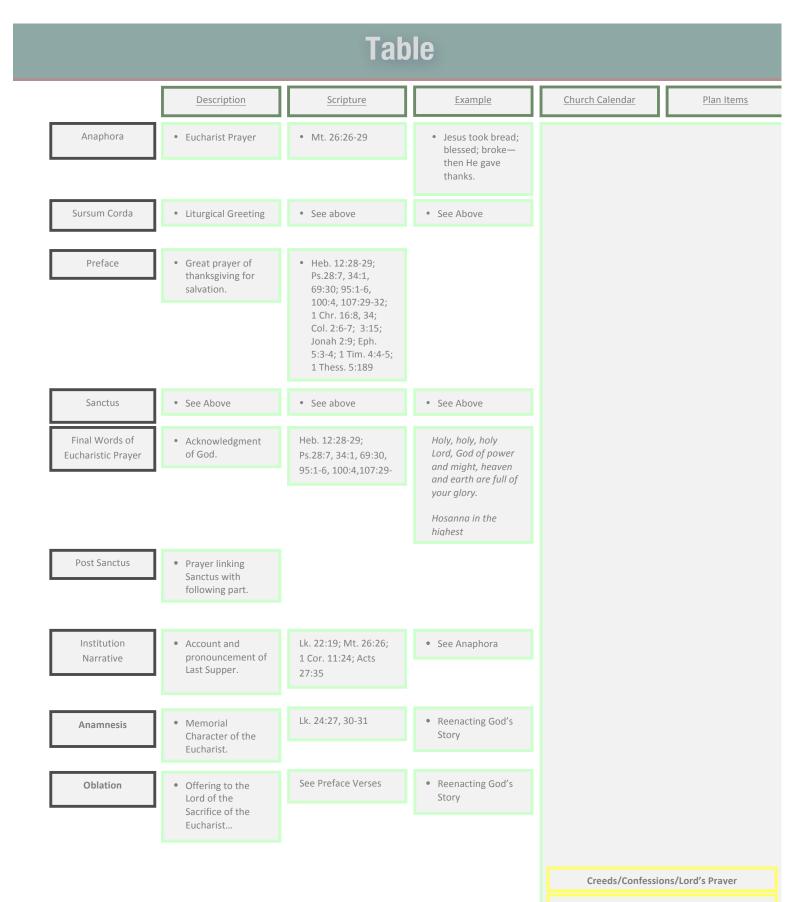


Petitions and Intercessions

	Description	<u>Scripture</u>	Example	Church Calendar	<u>Plan Items</u>
Elder Led Prayers	• Liturgical or Extemporaneous prayers by the leader.	1 Timothy			
Silent Personal Prayers	 Could be a prayer or Scripture Reading. 	Psalm 46:10	 Hands Raised Knees Bowed Clapping Singing Prostrate Kneeling 		

The Inner Courts

Preaching & Teaching of the Word						
	Description	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Example</u>	Church Calendar	Plan Items	
Testimony, Message, Scripture Presenting	 Liturgical or Extemporaneous 	Rom. 10:15	 Expository Preaching Series Testimony Scripture 			
Commissioning	 Laying on of hands and sending out of leaders by Eldership. 	1 Tim. 4:14, 5:22	Presenting, Dramatization or Reading • Discussion			
Creed/Faith Affirmations	 Establishing the Core beliefs through history 	 Ps. 40:11-13, 51:1- 4; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jhn. 1:8-9 	Apostles Creed Heidelberg Catechism Westminster Conf. Nicene Creed			



Alms or Offering Mt. 6:1-4

