

## **Faith Matters # 17 – Celebrate Together – July 30**

I felt a note of sarcasm in his voice when he asked me, “Do you go to church?” “Yes,” I answered. “I go there to worship God. Do you?”

His answer was no surprise. I hear it all the time. “No,” he said, “I don’t. I can worship God at home, or alone in a kayak in God’s great beautiful cathedral of nature. Forget the stained glass windows.”

I’m sure my reply was no surprise to him either, that I, too, can worship God alone at home, or anywhere. But what did surprise him was that I compared worship to an army, and to an orchestra. It’s really hard to have a one-man army or a one-person orchestra. Real worship isn’t a solo activity. It’s a celebration. And a party all by yourself isn’t much of a celebration.

That’s why Jesus called 12 disciples to help him bring good news to people, working together to heal and feed and teach. He didn’t do it alone. Then after he was assassinated, the Holy Spirit encouraged his followers to stay together and celebrate his resurrection. They all had stories to tell about how Jesus and the Holy Spirit inspired them. So, together – *together* – they sang songs of praise and thanksgiving, and listened to the earlier stories from Scripture. That’s worship.

You can pray all by yourself. But worship is a celebration together. As the “Call to Worship” puts it, “Come, let **US** worship God.”

And by the way, I asked my friend who paddles in nature’s beautiful cathedral, “You can worship God there. But do you?” You can guess his answer.

(by Rev. Willard Pottinger – Erskine Presbyterian Church, Hamilton)