

ELEMENT OF WORSHIP:

Benediction

God sends us out with his blessing

DEFINITION

The benediction is God's word of blessing to his people.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14

DEVOTIONAL

How things end can matter as much as how things begin. Many gatherings end with some sort of call to action. This is true of a political rally (go vote for this person!), of a PTO meeting (get started on this fundraiser!), or of a day of school (go do your homework!). Our worship service ends with a call to action as well. But the person being called upon to act is not the worshiper, but the One who is worshiped. As we leave the time of worship, the benediction proclaims God's continuing movement toward us as we move out into the world. The call is for God to be with us. This promise - God with us - was made by God the Father, embodied by Christ the Son, and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. Just as our worship service began with God's call to come and worship,

the service ends with the blessed assurance that God will go with us, wherever we might go. The benediction, then, is the spoken word of God's presence. God's presence is his blessing to his people from the garden of Eden to the new heavens and the new earth.

APPLICATION

For one of your quiet times, read as many "benedictions" as you can find. You can typically find them at the end of New Testament letters (Romans 16:20; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:23-24; Jude 24-25), as well as the final words of Jesus before the ascension (Matthew 28:20). You can also find some examples in the Old Testament (Numbers 6:24-26). Use these benedictions to meditate and pray on what it is to be blessed by God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Father, teach me to know the grace of Jesus. Help me to experience the love of God the Father. Enable me to embrace the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
