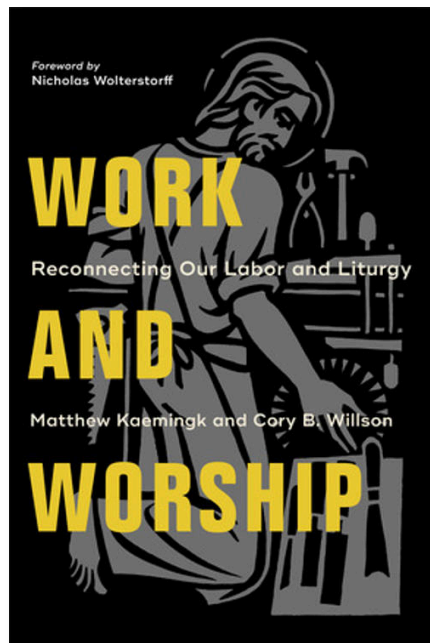


REVIEW: *Work and Worship: Reconnecting Our Labor and Liturgy* by Matthew Kaemingk and Cory B. Wilson

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Kaemingk, Matthew and Wilson, Cory B.
Work and Worship: Reconnecting Our Labor and Liturgy.
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In their book, *Work and Worship: Reconnecting Our Labor and Liturgy*, Matthew Kaemingk and Cory B. Wilson observe a problem: “Walking into a sanctuary, many workers feel like they’re visiting another world, a world quite detached from their world of work” (2). They feel that the “sanctuary . . . is incapable of responding to the raw struggles, questions, and issues they face in the workplace” (2). The disconnect many workers feel between worship and work is not first a theological one (4), but a deficiency in the way the gathered church forms workers. The solution the authors draw out in the book, stated concisely, rests in the intentional formation of workers during gathered worship, so they might fulfill their role as a priest in their marketplace parish as participants in God’s mission.

In Part 1, the authors embark on an in-depth discussion of how worship can contribute to the formation of workers, and also specific ways in which it fails in its calling to form workers in their vocations. They argue that worship should be responsive to “five elements that workers carry with them into the sanctuary: vocational laments (tears), vocational praises (trumpets), vocational confessions (ashes), vocational requests (petitions), and vocational offerings (fruits)” (210). In Part 2, drawing from both the Scriptural text and other sources, the authors consider how the worship practices of both Old Testament Israel and the early church can contribute to the formation of workers as participants in God’s mission.

Finally, in Part 3, the authors consider how contemporary worship practices can assist workers in meaningfully bridging the gap between their Sunday worship and their working lives. In chapter 10, the authors walk through seven actions (examining, approaching, thanking, receiving, sharing, holding, and consuming) “a worker might engage in at the [Lord’s] table,” and establish a tangible connection between God’s work in Jesus Christ and the believer’s experience in and through their daily work (196). Using the framework of the “five elements” from Part 1, in chapter 11, the authors consider practically how the liturgy of gathered worship can be transformational for the worker’s exercise of his or her priesthood in the marketplace. Chapter 12 considered how “corporate worship actively push(es) and propel(s) worshipers back into their work in the world” (241). Corporate worship has a vital sending role, commissioning workers to participation in the mission of God, including “God’s creative, sustaining, and redemptive plan” (246).

With its razor focus on the worship of the gathered community and its power to guide, disciple, and transform workers, *Work and Worship* breaks new ground in the discussions about faith and work. This book is a must-read for those who plan and participate in gathered worship, as well as theological educators who help equip believers for ministry in the church. In addition to offering a strong biblical and theological foundation for worship which forms workers, Kaemingk and Wilson offer a host of diverse liturgical practices ranging from prayers to entire worship services. These practices are drawn from the richness of the Biblical text, the history of the church, as well as the modern global church.

The book also invites further contextual discussion, especially in light of Covid-19 and the rapid changes in the global workplace, which affect both gathered worship and the experience of workers in the world. The authors acknowledge this in saying that their “task . . . is not to prescribe a universal plan for tying worship and work together...[but] to provide a set of enduring biblical, theological, and liturgical resources that diverse leaders can use to imagine and create deeper connections between worship and work” (11). The invitation is to creatively imagine how the liturgy which guides the worship of the church can equip the believer for transformative ministry as a priest in her everyday work.