

CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS:

A SHORT TOUR THROUGH THE LOVELY AND DIFFERENT PEOPLE WHO SAY WE WORSHIP JESUS



WEEK 1: THE EASTERN ORTHODOX

Bible Roots

Joshua 31:1-9	2 Kings 23:1-3	Matthew 16:15-19
John 17:20-24	Acts 1:20-26	Acts 6:5-6

If you were to start from these verses and say what the Church should be like, what would be most important to your Church?

Important Dates

- 325 AD: Emperor Constantine calls council of bishops (overseers) in Nicea (modern-day Turkey) to finalize the list of New Testament writings that would be read when the Church gathers on Sundays
- 381 AD: Emperor Theodosius calls council of bishops in Constantinople (also modern-day Turkey) to settle official Church teaching on the divinity and eternity of Christ
- 862 AD: Saint Cyril begins missionary work in modern-day Russia
- 1054 AD: After European knights attack Constantinople and Pope excommunicates the bishop of Constantinople, Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) churches officially and permanently split
- 1453: Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks ends the centralized administration of the Orthodox Church

Ways that the Orthodox Differ from Us

- Strong episcopal (deacons, priests, bishops, archbishops) structure means that local congregations do not have the final say in matters of doctrine but must submit to the hierarchy's decisions.
- Eucharist, not the sermon, is the center of their liturgy, and communion is strictly limited. Part of the service has all of those baptized in the Orthodox Church shout to those not baptized, "to the door!" before the bread and wine are served.
- A legitimate part of Orthodox worship is the use of ikons (holy paintings of exemplary Christians) which the Orthodox kiss on their way into holy places (sanctuaries, prayer corners) and through which the Orthodox ask prayer for the living from those waiting in Heaven.
- The Orthodox believe their Sunday worship to be a moment when those living on earth join in with the angels in Heaven, chanting the same chants that the apostles established and echoing the angels.
- Orthodox worship focuses on following the patterns of previous generations; attempting to attract strangers towards conversion or to make things more modern is not only off the table but seen as a great affront to the continuity of the Church.

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