

Sit down before God in fear and trembling

No, there is no typographical error in the title of the article!

Simply, it seems to me that the congregation hears the deacon saying the response in that peculiar way. Instead, the actual response is “Worship God in fear and trembling.” The result is that the majority of the congregation sits down during a period of the liturgy where the appropriate act is to worship with prostration in devotion and reverence.

In fact, there are several instances during the liturgy where we ought to worship in prostration, or at least to bow down in reverence. Among these instances, the **absolution prayers** of matins and vespers, the absolution of the servants, at the beginning of the procession of the lamb during the prayer of “**Glory and honor, honor and glory to the All-Holy Trinity...**”, and also during the descending of the Holy Spirit when the deacon cries out saying “**Worship God with fear and trembling.**” Also, before the fraction when we worship the holy body and the honored blood, and also after the fraction when the deacon invites us saying: “**Bow down your heads before the Lord**” and, lastly, during the final **confession**. In all of these instances, the purpose of the prostration is to revere and obtain spiritual grace from these situations.

In the ancient churches, there were no pews to sit down. People used to bow down and prostrate freely on the floor during the moments of prostration. However, nowadays not everyone in the church is able to prostrate because for the pews, except those who are standing in a spot that doesn't have any pews in front of them. The majority of people, who stand in the pew rows, can at least bow down with their upper body before God. **But to sit down at the time of prostration, it is an inappropriate behavior by all standards.**

Now, we should pay attention and have spiritual awareness for, every word being said in the liturgy, whether they are the prayers of the priest, reminders from the deacon, or any congregational response in order to have more focus and spiritual benefit.

One last point, There is no doubt that **there is a vast difference between the following two pictures: one in which God looks upon his congregation in the church and find them bowing down and prostrating in reverence and repentance, while in the other, He finds them sitting down with lack of appreciation to the reverence of the divine presence or the sanctity of these awesome moments.**

Let's all remember that the deacon response “worship God with fear and trembling,” and not “Sit down before God with fear and trembling”!



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