

Worship 101

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Hey Group Leaders!

Consider this flow for the study time together with your small group:

1. Set the tone for your group as you embark on this study on "Worship". What do you hope to take away from these next 4 sessions? Share this with your group, along with a heads up of what they can expect:
 - » This series will start with an introductory teaching on Worship, followed by 3 weeks of roundtable discussion videos on this topic.
 - » After each video, you can go through a couple of the discussion questions with your group, give them a reflection point to take away for the week, and close in communal prayer together.
 - » If anyone is keen to learn more on the topics discussed in this theme, check out the "Let's Go Deeper" resources. Links to any recommended online content can be found at thediscipleshipproject.org/worship.
2. Watch this week's video, **Worship 101**.
(Don't feel the need to go through the summary below with your group, this is just a written form of the teaching in the video in case anyone wants to come back and have it as a reference.)
3. Choose a couple of the "Let's Discuss..." questions below to discuss in your group.
4. Go over this week's reflection prompt with your group.
5. Choose someone in your group (try to pick someone different each week) to close in prayer, using the prompt below as a guide. Additionally, see if there are any other prayer requests amongst the group and allow your group members the opportunity to pray for each other.

Summary

First of all, worship is about way more than just singing songs! That is only one expression. If we reduce worship to part of a weekly church service, we will miss out on the power that true worship can have in our lives.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WORSHIP?

- The word "worship", in its various forms, is mentioned over 182 times in the Bible.
 - » This number varies depending on which English translation you are using, or which original Hebrew and Greek words are being considered.
 - » If you're curious, go to blueletterbible.org and search "worship" to find out more about where this word is used in the Bible and the original Greek and Hebrew words behind it.
- This word first appears in Genesis 22 in the story of Abraham and Isaac:

He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."
Genesis 22:5 NIV

- In this passage there is no mention of instruments or singers. There is a father who is willing to obediently sacrifice the most precious thing he has to God.
- As we move a bit further along in Scripture, we encounter various other forms and practices of worship. Here's a look at some of the expressions of worship we see in the Old Testament:
 - » **Altars:** God's people often set up stone altars to mark places where they had encounters with God. These altars served as declarations of His faithfulness and reminders of His work in their lives.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the Lord, who had appeared to him.
Genesis 12:7 NLT

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- » **Sacrifices & Offerings:** In the Old Testament, sacrifices & offerings symbolised that the worshiper was willing to give up something valuable in order to make atonement (provide forgiveness) for sin, express thankfulness and devotion, and support the work of His Kingdom.

Lay your hand on the animal's head, and the Lord will accept its death in your place to purify you, making you right with Him.

Leviticus 1:4 NLT

I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord.

Psalms 116:17 NLT

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

2 Samuel 24:24 NIV

- » **Prayers:** From the very beginning, the Old Testament reveals God's deep desire to cultivate an intimate relationship with His people. Prayer — whether spontaneous or guided — has always been one of the primary ways we connect with Him and grow in that relationship.

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

Exodus 33:11a NIV

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

Jeremiah 33:3 NIV

- » **Singing & Dancing:** Old Testament worshippers embodied their faith, using their entire selves - including their voices and bodies - to honour and thank God, celebrate victories, express lament, and tell stories of His faithfulness.

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing.

Exodus 15:20 NIV (this was just after the Israelites walked through the Red Sea)

Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts.

1 Chronicles 16:9 NIV

Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

Psalms 95:1 NLT

- » **Feasts, Festivals, & Fasting:** Feasts, festivals, and fasting were expressions of worship that centred around food — either by joyfully gathering to eat and celebrate God's provision, or by giving up food for a time to seek His mercy and guidance. These sacred practices helped God's people remember His faithfulness, repent, and renew their devotion to Him together.

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.'

Leviticus 23:1-2 NIV

This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.

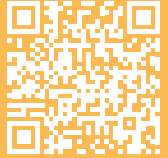
Exodus 12:14 NIV

So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and He heard our prayer.

Ezra 8:23 NLT

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- In the New Testament, Paul points to the fact that Jesus has now offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf and God no longer requires the ceremonies and ritual sacrifices of dead animals to worship Him. Instead, He wants a living sacrifice - our surrendered lives and hearts that are full of devotion to Him.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
Romans 12:1 NIV

- One of the most well-known Bible verses in relation to worship is from Jesus Himself:

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.
John 4:23-24 NIV

WHAT DOES WORSHIP LOOK LIKE IN OUR LIVES?

- When we worship, our spirits, hearts, and souls adore and connect with the Spirit of God. The very core of who we are is found loving Him.
- We can only worship God in this way when we have a healthy understanding of who He is, His nature, and His worth.
- John Piper said that "True worship is right valuing and treasuring God above all things".
- As followers of Jesus – worship is our first priority.
- Worship is found in the mundane and ordinary moments of life – just as much as in the spectacular and awe-inspiring moments in church services.
- In his book, **Elements of Worship**, Judson Cornwall wrote:

"Love ignored is ineffectual, love spurned is unfruitful, love embraced is transforming, but love returned is worship. This flow of love between the redeemed and their Redeemer will take place only when there is a consciousness of being together.

This awareness may occur during a public gathering of believers, or it may happen on the job, in the home, while driving the car, while flying in a plane. The heart of the believer can become the Throne of God when the eye of faith enables the person to see beyond the natural world and catch a glimpse of God involved in daily activities. Whenever there is an awareness of God, worship is a natural response."

WHY DO WE SING IN CHURCH?

- There are loads of references to singing in the Bible. Here are just some:

*Sing to the Lord, all you godly ones!
Praise His holy name.*
Psalm 30:4 NLT

*Come, let us sing to the Lord!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come to Him with thanksgiving.
Let us sing psalms of praise to Him.*
Psalm 95:1-2 NLT

*The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness;
He will quiet you by His love;
He will exult over you with loud singing.*
Zephaniah 3:17 ESV

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Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom He gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.
Colossians 3:16 ESV

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!
Acts 16:25-26 NLT

See also Exodus 15:1, Judges 5, Psalm 98:1, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 147:1, Isaiah 55:12, Ephesians 5:19, James 5:13, Hebrews 2:12, Revelation 15:3, and many more!

- Throughout Scripture, we see even the earliest Christians used songs to help form, state, and declare the beliefs of their communities.
- Worship through song helps give us language to express (and remind ourselves!) who God is and how we feel about Him in ways that we might not be able to come up with using our own words.
- These songs allow us to feed our minds and spirits with the truth of God. This builds spiritual strength and endurance in our lives.
- When Jesus tells us in John 4:24 to worship Him “in the Spirit and in truth”, this truth must be rooted in biblical understandings of who God is and what He is like.
- When we face difficulties in life, the truth in our worship songs can remind us that God is with us, He goes before us, and whatever we are facing right now is only temporary in light of eternity.
- This gives us an opportunity to worship God on the days that we feel like it, and the days that we don’t – simply because He is worthy.
- When we worship God in church, surrounded by other believers, we get a glimpse of what eternity will be like. John writes in the book of Revelation:

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

*“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”*

Revelation 7:9-10 NIV

*Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea,
and all that is in them, saying:*

*“To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”*

Revelation 5:13 NIV

**Worship is not about making God a priority in our lives.....
it requires us to make Him *the first* priority in everything we do.**

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Let's Discuss...

- What comes to mind for you when you hear the word worship? What is your current understanding of what it means and looks like to worship?
- How does it make you feel to think about offering yourself as a “living sacrifice” as suggested in Romans 12:1? What does this mean to us in a modern context?
- Judson Cornwall wrote in his book, **Elements of Worship**, “The heart of the believer can become the Throne of God when the eye of faith enables the person to see beyond the natural world and catch a glimpse of God involved in daily activities.” How difficult or easy do you find it to have an awareness of God in your daily activities?
- What impact has worshipping God through singing had in your relationship with Him?
- Jay says, “Worship is not about making God a priority in our lives, it requires us to make Him *the first* priority in everything we do.” Is there any area of your life where you sense God inviting you to reorder your priorities and put Him first?

Let's Reflect This Week...

What do you think Jesus meant in these verses?

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.
John 4:23-24 NIV

Have a think about this and we'll chat about it more in the next video.

Let's Pray...

“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”

Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment...”

Matthew 22:36-38 NLT

Prayer itself is a great way to worship God—it allows us to verbally honor and adore Him, expressing our love and reverence in a deeply relational way.

- Let's ask God to teach us what it looks like to love and worship Him with our whole selves, and in every area of our lives.

Let's Go Deeper...

- **Elements of Worship** by Judson Cornwall [book]
- **Authentic Worship: The Path to Greater Unity with God** by A.W. Tozer [book]
- **Extravagant Worship** by Darlene Zschech [book]
- **Why Worship** edited by Tim Hughes & Nick Drake [book]
- **Glory of God** by BibleProject [podcast]
- **Scotty Smithy - Theology of Worship Bonus** by Lisa Harper's Back Porch Theology [podcast]
- **What Is Worship?** by N. T. Wright [video]