

## Key Value # 4

# Worship

### A) Definitions

“Worship is an attitude that attributes to God His worth; stating and affirming His supreme value. It includes the mind and the body.”

“Worship is the submission of our entire nature to God. It is the quickening of our conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of our mind with His truth; the purifying of our imagination with His beauty; the opening of our heart to His love; the surrender of our will to His purpose”.

It is recognizing & delighting in the primacy of God in all things.

**“Of Him, through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever” Romans 11:36**

**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind & strength... and love your neighbour as yourself.” Mark 12:30,31**

### B) What are some common misconceptions about worship?

- Are we worshipping worship?<sup>1</sup> Expressions of worship?
- Are we delighting in God Himself, rather than novelty or aesthetic beauty?
- It's not simply “what happens before the sermon”.
- ALL of life is worship - not only corporate worship on a Sunday. Romans 12:1

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”**

We display God's worth in our obedience in all realms, in resisting temptations, in witnessing, in serving each other, & in building one another up.

### C) How can we encourage individuals to prepare themselves for corporate worship?

*Jesus, where'er thy people meet,  
there they behold thy mercy-seat;  
where'er they seek thee, thou art found,  
and every place is hallowed ground.*

*For thou, within no walls confined,  
inhabitest the humble mind;  
such ever bring thee where they come,  
and going, take thee to their home<sup>2</sup>.*

### D) Hindrances to integrity in our worship

What do we need to repent of to prepare ourselves for true worship & embracing God?

- Intoxication by self importance Jas 4:6
- Friction between partners 1 Pet 3:7
- Friction between brothers Matt 5:42
- Cherishing a specific sin Psalm 66:18

### E) Worship “in the church”

- Intelligible – 1 Cor 14:23-25. Use of the mind. Truth matters.
- Participatory – not something we watch other people do, as in Eastern Orthodoxy.
- Inspirational – we should be receiving from God as well as giving praise.
- Requires Leadership – “A *worship leader*” is the butler to lead the worshipper from the front door to the Master of the house. You're not there to see the butler”.
- Lost people cannot worship God, but they watch us worship.
  - Do they see duty or devotion?
  - Do they see passivity or passion?
  - Do they get it or do they want to get out?

### F) A flicker or a flame?

“When passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centered on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to “declare *His*

glory among the nations” (Psalm 96:3). Even outsiders feel the disparity between the boldness of our claim upon the nations and the blandness of our engagement with God.” – *John Piper*

### G) One desirable outcome

**“If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.” 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 ESV**

### H) The Place of Music

We are brought into God’s presence by faith, through the only Mediator Jesus Christ, & God’s self-revelation in His Word. Not primarily by singing. Music is important, but worship could survive without it. Our assurance depends on the finished work of Christ, not on emotional highs that some forms of music may not give.

Yet we must not overreact, for the Bible has a high regard for the place of singing in the Christian’s life (Eph 5:18-20)<sup>3</sup>. We should sing both to praise God & to encourage one another. Singing enables us to express emotions. Our songs also influence our theology.<sup>4</sup>

### Questions for personal application & discussion

1. During times of worship, what emotions are you most aware of?
2. Have you ever felt a strong sense of the Lord’s presence in corporate worship? When was this? Do you know what factors contributed to this sense?
3. How can you be sure that the feeling you had at that Christian meeting was God’s presence with you rather than just the effect of some good music?
4. Have you ever sensed that God is ministering to you while you are worshipping Him? What made you aware of that?
5. How much time is allotted specifically to times of praise, thanksgiving & prayer to God in church? Should this be longer?
6. What aspects of corporate worship do you find most meaningful/ least meaningful?
7. How could Ebenezer take steps to strengthen & deepen its experience of worship?
8. Who ought to lead the worship?
9. Who should choose the hymns?
10. Who should choose the tunes? Do too many tunes in the minor key encourage us?
11. How do we maintain a balance between contemporary worship & respect for traditional forms? Toleration. (A CD by John MacArthur on this for group members to listen to.)

“If congregations are to fulfil the various purposes for which God wants them to assemble together, and especially to have extended times of reverent worship, they will probably need to find creative solutions that enable them to meet for longer periods of time, and omit or reschedule some activities that have become habitual or traditional on Sunday mornings but are really not necessary.” (Wayne Grudem on Worship)

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<sup>1</sup> “I looked at Christ, & the dove of peace flew into my heart. I looked at the dove, & it flew away” Spurgeon

<sup>2</sup> William Cowper

<sup>3</sup> We are commanded to “sing to the Lord at least 13 times in the Old Testament alone. E.g. Psalm 147:7 Jer 20:13

<sup>4</sup> Are our songs & hymns True, God-centred, Clear, & Unselfish? (Taken from Vaughan Roberts in True Worship chap.5)