

Following Christ: Worship



Slice F10

Worship

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1 Memory Verse

Psalm 34:1 (ESV)

1 I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 Worship

In the New Testament Greek, the word most often translated as 'worship' is *proskuneo*, which means 'to fall down before' or 'bow down before.' Christian worship is both an attitude and the action of granting God the adoration, reverence, exaltation and homage, due to Him. Just as the cherubim and the elders of Revelation give God 'glory and honour and power'. Recognising that He is seated on the throne, the believer needs to worship God, acknowledging His holiness, loving kindness, faithfulness, goodness, greatness, authority, and power. Not only do we recognise the all-powerful authority of God, but also our genuine love for Him. We love Him because He first loved us.

A believer needs to recognise that worship of God is more than singing songs of worship. The first song in God's worship hymnal is a wisdom psalm more suited, one would think, for the book of Proverbs as it includes words such as 'counsel', 'way' and 'prosper.' The question that arises is why God would place a wisdom psalm at the gateway of the journey through the psalms, rather than an outburst of praise, such as Psalm 145: 'I will exalt you, my God, the King; I will praise your name forever and ever.' The answer reaches to the core of God's philosophy for us; in God's eyes, obedient, scripture-focused living is the highest form of worship, and placing God's wisdom and way above our own selfish, sinful will is the greatest form of worship. This understanding is to guide us through the rest of the psalms. This is an important lesson that needs to be understood in the modern, emotionally driven and entertainment-seeking of today's worship meetings. Worship must first be a lifestyle and only second an event, for the lifestyle gives credibility to the worship!

God is not impressed by acts of outward worship. God seeks the worship of a committed life that includes acts such as prayer, Bible reading, giving offerings, and loving others. Many people today go to Church meetings to 'experience' God in the worship, but they fall short of actually worshipping God. Of this type of worship Jesus said:

Matthew 15:8 (ESV)

8 "This people honours me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;

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2.1 *Style of Worship Meetings*

There are Churches today that follow the modern styles of music and have their churches looking like theatres. Some churches will only sing hymns, while other less formal churches will sing only choruses. There are also churches that strike a happy medium and celebrate the Lord through both hymns and choruses. Choruses that have a repetitive chant are to be avoided as they are more of a mantra than praises to God. Worship songs should always have didactic¹ content, with an intention of teaching an important message. A gifted band leader will often be led by the Holy Spirit to match worship songs to the sermon delivered after the worship. Worship should always be Christ-centered and focused. We are to make much of Jesus. Praising and exalting Him, rather than just singing about Him.

The role of a worship team is to lead the congregation into worship worthy of our Great Lord and Saviour and to prepare the hearts of the congregation for the message that will be delivered from the pulpit.

A believer should not consider the meeting of the church as the only place of worship. A child of the Lord should find time during the week to worship the Lord as well. This could be through recording and listening to worship songs on their cell phones, in their car, during exercise, and downtime at home.

2.2 *Offering Worship*

Worship should always be seen as a two-way communication; you are giving worship to God and in turn receiving a blessing from Him.

Examples of offering worship that allow a believer to show love to the Lord and raise Him up in worship are:

2.2.1 **Praise**

In F2 Disciple - Student slice, the ACTS acronym was used as an aid to help new believers learn how to pray. 'A' is the 'Adoration' praise, part of the acronym. The cherubim and elders of Revelation 4 are overawed by the magnificence and greatness of God and burst out in worship and praise. When we praise God, we too are recognising the awesome greatness of God.

When a king is seated on his throne, he is the highest authority in the land and must, therefore, be shown due respect. To refuse to recognise his superiority is a rebellion against the governing powers of the nation. In the same manner, our praise of God is recognising His authority and power and the many attributes that make Him a great

¹Didactic - intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an [ulterior motive](#).

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God. These include His omniscience (all-knowing), omnipotence (all-powerful), omnipresence (everywhere), and omnibenevolence (supremely good).

The songs recorded in the book of Psalms are Holy Spirit-inspired words of worship, which serve as a songbook guide to how we should praise our Father:

Psalm 145:1–3 (ESV)

1 I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.

These words of praise should continually be on our lips, as we learn to recognise the love, help and support He gives us throughout every day.

2.2.2 Singing

Following the example of the Book of Psalms, the Church has over the years amassed a multitude of great hymns and songs that are used by worship teams. The worship team has an awesome responsibility, in that they are to lead the congregation, using both the words of the song and the tune to bring about corporate worship that honours God. Caution in the selection of songs must be exercised by worship teams. Modern songs are not wrong but must carry the heart of worship to praise and exalt Jesus. It should be possible to learn the songs so the congregation can enter worship to God in Spirit and truth. The purpose of the priesthood of all believers is to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth.

Supporters of football can continually sing rousing songs for their team, so why can't the Church do the same? It is a very special thing to be part of a congregation that can join together in song and give glory to our God.

Psalm 22:3 (KJV)

3 But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabits the praises of Israel.

As we are instructed by Scripture to abide in Christ, God abides in His people, He inhabits the praises of His children. Their praises to God are so numerous that He is lifted up and surrounded by them.

2.2.3 Thanksgiving

The fact that we should continually be recognising God's hand in our lives was mentioned earlier. This is an important part of Thanksgiving, which was the 'T' in the acronym 'ACTS'. We cannot always perceive just how much God is working in our lives, sometimes it is only years later that we look back do we understand that the Hand of

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God has been over our lives. So, it is an act of faith that we continually thank God for His loving care and guidance over our lives.

2.2.4 Confession

Confession is the 'C' in ACTS that was covered in F3 Temptation. An important part of praise is recognising the great salvation we have received through the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour.

2.2.5 Prayers

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Paul, in His letter to the Thessalonians, instructs them 'to pray without ceasing,' which seems to be a very legalistic requirement. To put the scripture into perspective, it is the same as having a persistent cough, where you will tell the doctor that you are continually coughing. What Paul is suggesting is that we partner with God each and every day and be continually mindful that He is always with us and we are, therefore, to continually communicate with Him.

2.2.6 Tithes and Offerings

Giving to others and having a generous lifestyle is an important part of worshipping God. It teaches us to become more like Jesus and to be obedient to His commands. Jesus said:

Luke 6:37–38 (ESV)

37 'Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; **38** give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.'

Acts 20:35 (ESV)

35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

This statement by Jesus must not be taken in the prosperity theology perspective of, 'if I give, God has to give me more'. A believer gives because it is a loving, selfless act that God requires of His children. The true treasure of God's rewards for our obedience is a closer walk with our loving Father. This topic will be covered in more detail in F11 Service.

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2.2.7 Offering Thanksgiving Before Meals

By saying 'grace' before a meal, a believer is recognising that it is God who provides all that we have. So, a meal is an appropriate time to recognise the provision of God in our lives.

3 The Conduct of Your Life

In F2 Disciple Student we looked at how a disciple in New Covenant times aimed to emulate their Rabbis, even to the extent that they would copy their style of dress. This habit continues to this day; on a Sabbath in Jerusalem, the Jews walk to their synagogues, and you can sometimes tell which synagogue they belong to by the way the men are dressed. So as disciples of Jesus, we are to conduct our lives in the same manner as our great Rabbi, Jesus.

3.1 *Postures in Worship*

Church on the Way encourages believers to draw close and worship God in spirit and truth.

People express their love for God in different ways, each to their own:

Some will raise their heads and lift their arms in the worship of the God of heaven, while others may close their eyes and bow their heads in reverence. Some believers will humble themselves and kneel, some may even lie prostrate before their Lord, while others will take banners and wave them in praise of their God. Worship is an intensely personal activity, it is an expression of praise, glory, honour, and reverence to the Lord.

The unacceptable posture is when the person wants the attention of others so that people can observe how holy and righteous, they are. God does not focus on the outward expression; He sees the heart and the heart attitude must match the posture of worship.

4 Benefits of Worship

4.1 *Instruction*

There should be a didactic component to worship, and the congregation can learn aspects of scripture while worshipping. Hymns are said to be sermons put to music.

4.2 *Preparation*

The worship prepares the believer spiritually for the sermon to follow. Just as fasting places the spiritual over the physical, so too does a spiritually uplifting worship session.

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The believer will be in a better 'spiritual' state to receive what God has for them and to allow the Holy Spirit to teach them.

4.3 Guidance

During times of worship when a person is drawing close to God, they are more open to hearing God and His message for them becomes imprinted in their minds and hearts.

4.4 Comfort

Worship of God may be a great comfort to a person in times of difficulty; it builds their faith and confidence in a God who is greater than all their problems.

Psalm 100 (ESV)

A PSALM FOR GIVING THANKS.

1 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

2 Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

3 Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

5 For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

4.5 Joy

Worship should always bring joy to the heart of the believer. You are coming before your 'Abba', Father and your worship should be a loving embrace with great Joy.

4.6 Rejoice Always

No matter how burdened we are with the trials and tribulations of the world, we are **commanded** to rejoice in all circumstances:

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

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To rejoice in times of great hardship and distress is a very difficult thing to do but, as believers, we are called to joy, not to hopelessness and negativity. Rejoicing before the Lord in the face of adversity is an act of great faith, trusting that God can see you through difficult times. God has a plan and purpose for our lives and part of maturing requires living through times of trial and testing. Rejoicing in those trials is a mark of great maturity, the person recognises that they are being considered by God for preparation for service, which has eternal rewards. The disciples considered it an honour to be persecuted, as it meant they were sharing the suffering for the Kingdom, just as Jesus had done.

5 Proclamation

'Father, thank you that you have raised me up to be part of your royal priesthood. I will bless You at all times and Your praise will be continually in my mouth. I rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks in all circumstances for this is Your will for me in Christ Jesus.'

6 Prayer

'Father, how in times of trials, temptations, and persecution I neglect to praise You. Will You enable me in Christ by the Holy Spirit to bless, praise and worship You in all circumstances? Allow my love for you to be a Song of Praise.'