

WORSHIP: WHAT IT IS AND WHY WE DO IT

Psalm 96 & Isaiah 6:1-7

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- If someone said to you, “let’s worship,” what would you expect to do?
- As you currently understand it, what is the purpose of worship?

Worship is an experience that Christians can easily take for granted. Some Christians would even admit that their church’s worship is boring. It’s easy to blame our complaints and frustrations with worship on differences in music style or liturgy. But is worship really just an experience? Many of us have an anemic understanding of worship. Worship is not a particular set of practices some old guy thought up long ago; it’s a heartfelt response of appreciation that is often described and encouraged in the Bible. Digging into scripture is where we begin to define and recognize the distinctives of true worship.

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- What do you think of the idea that doing what you’re created to do well is an expression of worship? How do you think living as God intended ascribes glory to his name?
- Study your church’s liturgy. Can you find patterns in the format? Where do you observe worship of God the creator and God the redeemer? Are there mentions of both God as creator and God the redeemer? When is there vertical dialog (dialog between us and God) and when does horizontal dialog occur (dialog from believer to believer)?
- Consider each piece of your church’s worship service individually, as sections, and the service as a whole. What do you observe? If possible, compare a few similar services. Do you notice any trends?
- What does it mean to you that God has called you to worship and invites you into communion with him? How does it impact you to think that when you worship you are not worshipping alone or even just with your church family but that you have been called to worship by God himself and that you worship with believers of all times and places, and with the heavenly hosts?
- How can you incorporate worship into your daily life? How can you let the echos of your gathered weekly worship echo throughout your week?

Related Passages

- **Psalm 148**
- **Romans 12:1-2**
- **Hebrews 10:19-25**

Conclusion

Throughout this Groundwork program, Scott Hoezee references *For All God's Worth: True Worship and the Calling of the Church* by N.T. Wright. In his opening chapter on worship, Wright borrows the motif of 1 Corinthians 13 to offer a picture of true worship. Consider the below quote as you continue to reflect on and discuss worship.

Worship is humble and glad; worship forgets itself in remembering God; worship celebrates the truth as God's truth, not its own. True worship doesn't put on a show or make a fuss; true worship isn't forced, isn't half-hearted, doesn't keep looking at its watch, doesn't worry what the person in the next pew may be doing. True worship is open to God, adoring God, waiting for God, trusting God even in the dark. -N.T. Wright

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