

What's the Point?
What's the point of worship?
Part 4

Intro: Have you ever wondered what's the point of worship? I was driving by the church building last week and noticed our reader board saying; "Worship Service Times." We define our services with the word worship. We don't call it a "Preaching Service"...or even a "Teaching Service". We call it a worship service. If we're going to define these times with the word worship, we probably should ask ourselves if we do? I know we gather together every week, but do we really worship? Why is worship so important that we would define the gathering of the church with this one word?

What's the point of worship?

1. Worship helps us experience God

John 4:23-24 "But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (NLT)

Ps. 89:15 "Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord." (NLT)

- God wants us to experience Him. God knows that He designed us with the ability to commune and experience our Creator. Experiencing a dynamic relationship with God is the purpose we exist. We are made for a Divine relationship.
- Jesus said the Father is looking for people to worship Him...experience Him. Since God is spirit, we worship God in spirit and truth. God created us with a spirit. Our spirit connects with His spirit and a Divine connection happens.
 - God created you with a Divine frequency. You have the ability to tune into God. It's like your radio – you listen to the stations you enjoy as you dial into the right frequency. Worship is like this. It dials you into God's frequency so you experience Him.
- We worship God spiritually but also in truth. We worship what is true about God not what is made up by mankind. We don't worship our opinions or ideas of God. God's word has revealed to us what is true about God. Jesus came to reveal to us what is true about God. Therefore, when spirit and truth are combined, connection happens.
- Notice that Ps. 89:15 connects worship with experiencing the presence of God. Worship is a relational thing not a religious thing. Worship is a presence thing not a performance thing.

- Therefore, if we do not understand the point of worship or resist worship we are hindering our experience with God. If you want to experience God, then learn to worship.

2. Worship helps us express love and gratitude to God

Mark 12:30 “And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.” (NLT)

- Worship is a way we express our love and devotion to God. Even though we know this as the greatest command, it’s really a worship command. We love what we worship and we worship what we love. Therefore, to love God is to worship Him.
- The book of Psalms – the worship book of Israel – filled with songs that worship God for who He is and what He has done. The less we know about who God is and the less we know what He does, the more difficult it is to love Him. WHY? Because it’s difficult to truly love someone you don’t know.
- BUT, as you grow in your understanding of God and your experience with Him your connection and love for Him grows. It works the same way in our relationships with one another.
- The better you know someone, the more positive experiences you have together, the more you like each other. The dilemma with so many believers in Jesus is they just have never done this with God.
- Worship helps with this journey. We learn truths about God as we worship. We experience God as we worship. We are impacted and touched by God as we worship. Worship impacts our thinking – our emotions - Eventually, it gets much easier to love God as we worship.

3. Worship transforms us into His likeness

Rom. 12:1-2 “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...” (NLT)

- Rom. 12 is teaching us that surrender is worship. When we are surrendering our lives to God we are worshipping Him. We are making a choice to change the authority structure of our lives. Worship is taking myself off the throne of my life and putting Jesus there. This choice changes us.
- WHY? Because we can’t transform our own lives. We can’t make our lives look like Jesus without Jesus. Jesus must be on the throne of our life in order to be transformed. Therefore, when I purposely give Jesus control of my life that is worship.

- This choice is not a one and done kind of thing. WHY? Because our flesh loves to be in control. We are going to battle this struggle for the rest of our lives. Worship reminds us to surrender every time. It helps us reflect who is really in control. It reminds us that only as I surrender to Jesus am I changed into His image.
 - Rom 12 says that our lives are a living and holy sacrifice to God. Let's understand the imagery. In the OT, sacrifices were killed then placed on an altar. BUT, we are living sacrifices. We willingly give up our lives daily in order to worship and follow Jesus. BUT, living sacrifices have a tendency to keep crawling off the altar. Therefore it requires us to recognize where we're at. Worship helps with this.
- Worship makes us slow down and ask these questions. It slows us down so we can realize we took back control and now we can surrender once again.
- The other aspect of why worship transforms us is because of presence. The more time we spend in His presence the more we are changed. We are influenced by who we hang out with. AND, if we are hanging out with Jesus experiencing His presence, our lives will just gradually change.

4. Worship glorifies God

- Worship is literally declaring God's worth. He is worthy of our praise, our love, our worship. When we declare these things, we bring God glory.

I Cor. 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (NLT)

- The purpose of our lives is to bring glory to God. HOW? We bring Him glory when we live in a manner that pleases Him. Worship is one way we do this. Worship pleases God, therefore it brings Him glory.

- His creation worships Him

Ps. 19:1-4 "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world." (NLT)

- The angels worship Him

*Neh. 9:6 "You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all, and the **angels** of heaven **worship** you." (NLT)*

- Everything that God created gives Him praise and worship. Only the people made in His image have a choice to worship and glorify God. We have this choice everyday.

5. Worship strengthens the church community

Heb. 10:25 "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." (NLT)

- We shouldn't neglect meeting together because when we meet, we worship together. Worship is a group experience. Worship is something the church does together. Of

course you can worship alone, but when the church gathers to worship together there is a unique spiritual experience.

- Experiencing the presence of God together is a powerful thing. It connects us to one another. It builds unity in the church. It grows our love for one another. When we connect with the God of love, we naturally will love one another more.
- God knits our hearts together with Him. The greatest commands are to love God and love one another. This happens when we all together worship at the throne of God.
- It's going to be difficult to feel unified with people you don't worship together with. I may not know you personally, but when we are both connecting with God, singing, worshipping, raising our voices and maybe even our hands together, I feel a connection with you. The same God unifies us!

How do we practice worship?

It's time to put this into practice now.

Singing songs about who God is, what God does and our experience with Him is probably the most common way people worship. Worship is not limited to this. I love to worship God in nature – often this is alone. (explain)

- But for today, we are going to utilize songs. Why songs?

Songs can express our hearts and our emotions in such unique ways. Music has a way of expressing the deep desires and emotions of the human heart. Even in bible times, singing was often connected with worship.

Even the angels in heaven sing. We get glimpses of heaven in the bible and often we see angels around the throne of God worshipping – and singing praises to God.

*Ps. 100:2 “**Worship the Lord** with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy.” (NLT)*

Two final thoughts regarding worship (Worship team back on the platform)

- Our worship is an active, expressive experience.
 - Ps. 150 – READ
 - Sometimes worship can be quieter and more reflective.
 - Sometimes worship is active, loud, and dynamic. It's all appropriate worship. Do not think that more mellow reflective worship is more spiritual than lively expressive worship. It's all worship. Sometimes we reflect...sometimes we celebrate.
 - Because worship is expressive, it often involves physical movement. The bible uses the word “dancing.” Explain
 - Let me address why people raise their hands when they worship.

*Ps. 63:4 “I will praise you as long as I live, **lifting up my hands** to you in prayer.” (NLT)*

- Since prayer is simply communication with God, worship is in essence a form of prayer. We are communing with God when we worship.
- Our hands raised reflect what is going on inside our hearts as we worship. Sometimes hands raised indicates surrender. Sometimes agreement. Sometimes it's declaration. Sometimes it reflects faith. Sometimes determination and courage.
- We want you to feel the freedom to worship God and express your love for Him.
- Worship is a choice
 - What I want us to do is practice worship together. Now that we have a better understanding of what worship is, we need to do it. We need to choose it. The worship team is coming back up here and lead us in worship. They are not leading us in singing songs.
 - Everyone here has a choice to make. You can sing a song or you can worship God. You can speak lyrics or you can connect with the heart of God and worship Him. Worship is a choice. Now, let's collectively make that choice now and put these truths into practice. Let's not do this just today, let's engage in worship with more passion every Sunday we gather.

Prayer: