

Worship Arts Workshop – General Session

GOALS FOR TODAY (CHRIS)

Our goal today is to answer three questions: What is Worship? Why is it important? Why is congregational, musical worship important?

At CCC, one of our pillars of faith is the fact that we are:

WORSHIP DRIVEN

Our Worship Arts department- everyone from our leaders, singers, choir, musicians, tech team- EVERYONE, shares one common goal:

“We create space for God and His people to meet”

If our job as worship leaders is to create space, what then is your job as a worshipper? To meet WITH God. This is the simplest possible definition of worship. Spending intentional time with God.

(We have taught in other settings about the Greek and Hebrew definitions for praise and worship. While they are helpful, they should merely confirm what we already know- that when we spend time with an awesome God, we will naturally praise Him and worship Him!)

We are going to take some time to explore what it means to be WITH God. How do we, as physical beings, meet with a spiritual God? Thankfully, God gives us examples throughout Scripture of what this looks like, some how-to instructions, and even some glimpses at possible outcomes of worship.

EXAMPLES OF WORSHIP

- **Rev. 5; 14:2-3** - Musical Worship is happening in heaven! When we experience music on earth, we are duplicating a heavenly experience! We are designed to have an emotional and Spiritual response to music.
- **Exodus 25-27** - God gave us the Tabernacle as a pattern for sacrifices of praise and worship on earth.
- **Psalms 100** - Praise: gratitude, awe.

WORSHIP: WHAT DO WE SACRIFICE?

- **Romans 12:1-2** - Ourselves, specifically our minds and...
- **Isaiah 29:13** - Our hearts (our love, our will, our emotions)

MORE INSTRUCTION ON WORSHIP

- **John 4:24** - Jesus tells us straight: True worshippers worship God in Spirit and Truth!
Spirit: The Holy Spirit that God gives every believer in Christ.
Truth: The Word of God.
- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - Do this together! Somebody needs you and what you have to share.

To sum things up, God tells us to gather together and offer Him praise and worship through musical, Spirit-filled songs from the Word.

We now know how to set the stage and create the space, so let's look more in depth at what it means to meet with God.

EXCHANGE – WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE “WITH” (MICHELLE)

1. ABOUT EXCHANGE

Exchange - The Oxford dictionary defines it this way:

An act of giving one thing and receiving another in return.

If you think about it. Any worthwhile, beautiful, amazing, spectacular event involves...an exchange. A special cycle of giving and receiving, where all involved are benefited. This could look like the sweet laughter of a child after being given a toy; or a reassuring word from a friend, after being confided in...For me, one example of a beautiful exchange is when...I make dinner and my husband does the dishes.

Take a moment and discuss with one or two people around you a beautiful exchange that happens in your life...

I find many times that God speaks through creation, and, we can find His will for us through tangible life examples in His word.

2. CLUES FROM CREATION-THE FIRST EXCHANGE

Let's take a look at what is likely THE most critical and impacting exchange for us as human beings on this earth. Our foundation for life. There are no coincidences here, as our heavenly Father chose for us to always be fully reliant on Him in a tangible way.

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. - Genesis 2:7 NIV

The beautiful exchange here is when we take that same breath and give it back to Him in praise and adoration.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. - Psalm 150:6 NIV

3. CLUES FROM CREATION – CULTIVATION AS AN EXCHANGE

In the same passage, immediately following that Breath of Life given, we learn of yet another tangible example of an exchange. We learn that a garden has been planted.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. -Genesis 2:15

So, we see that the Lord always had work in mind for His people. And the first occupation? Gardening. Again, there are no coincidences with God, so we have to ask...why the significance of a garden? Ask any gardener, and they will tell you that at the heart of our responsibility in gardening is something called cultivation. Yes, cultivation is a type of work.

Cultivation – as I define it:

Cultivation is a beautiful exchange, where God provides both the starting and end result of the garden, but he invites us to join Him in the process.

And let us always remember:

It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. - I Corinthians 3:7 MSG

[4. A TESTIMONY ON CULTIVATION-KATHERINE WOLF](#)

I learned about Katherine during a virtual women's conference last summer, as we were all beginning to process the magnitude of COVID. She was a speaker at the conference. Katherine lived a simple, beautiful, and easy life with her husband and new baby. They loved God. They lived the life! They lived near the beach and she did modeling to support the family's income. But then, out of nowhere, she suffered a massive brain stem stroke at 26 years old. After surviving partial brain removal surgery to keep alive, she went through 2 years of rehab and hospital stays. She had to relearn how to eat, drink and walk. Ultimately, she ended up partially deaf, blind, and paralyzed in half of her body. After 5 years of still continuous pain, surgeries, and depression, she had to come up for air and realize what God was doing in her story. Then she had an epiphany, and realized God had **chosen** her for such a *special* type of life, a *special* type of worship and special, **rich** relationship. And then...in spite of it all, she began to thrive, spiritually. She has become a testament to the miracle of God's power. She now speaks all over the world offering encouragement to those without hope. When asked how she maintains such an incredible attitude in the midst of her incredibly difficult life, she responded by saying:

This deep joy is cultivated. I'm not relatively superhuman. I just recognize my need to cultivate a deep joy that sustains and is real.

We came to the workshop to learn how to develop or cultivate our worship. So, remember this, for **rich** worship, we must have **rich** soil.

[5. TIPS ON CULTIVATION](#)

Listen, I am the ultimate plant killer. If you bless me with a plant, you must know that you have sentenced that poor thing to no uncertain death. So, for tips on cultivation, I found a site online called midwestgardentips.com. Not me. But midwestgardentips.com. They seem to offer good advice. Let's take a look on what *they* recommend, and how we can apply this metaphorically to our worship cultivation - the soil as a metaphor our lives.

- **Nutrients Required - *Your soil needs nutrients to become rich and produce a greater yield.***
What are nutrients in this context, you ask? Let me put it this way...we have some friends, who receive the golden award for not wasting. Any peels, uneaten food, and certain trash, they don't send to the landfill, but they place it in this little covered tin container on their kitchen counter. And then, when its full, they feed this stuff to a little colony of tiny worms that live in a "worm tower" in their garage. Give it some time, and the worms produce waste. That worm waste is then extracted and used to make garden soil rich with nutrients. Because of that waste, those gardens FLOURISH.

So, by now, you know that what is creating the rich soil is none other than fertilizer, a.k.a., poop, a.k.a., the brown emoji, i.e., the stinky stuff. Some of us have a lot of that in our lives right now. COVID stinks. Hardships are rough! Life is hard! But going back to our example, Katherine no longer *resented* the difficult life given her, because she knew she was given the ingredients for rich cultivation.

So don't waste! Are you one to just pitch your stuff in the trash? Don't waste your life experiences. Work those hardships back into the soil of your life. Give God thanks for your situation and be open to how he wants to use that situation in your life to FLOURISH you.

- **Let It Go - Cultivating involves removing weeds from the garden and loosening the soil to improve the retention and penetration of air, water and nutrients.** We must be open to the Lord doing the work in our lives of breaking up fallow ground. This could mean not being stuck in our old ways, letting go of a bad relationship, stepping out of agreement with toxic thinking, not operating in unforgiveness, etc.
- **Crop Rotations - Multiple crops in a rotation break weed, insect, and disease cycles. Rotations produce healthy and productive crops.** The Lord will provide new experiences in our lives to keep us healthy, and give us the strength and new perspective to break any unhealthy cycles the enemy has planned for us.
- **Space for God to Work - Each plant seed requires a different length of time to germinate and mature.** We must allow the space required in our lives for listening, waiting, tarrying, trusting. Again, keeping in mind:

It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. - 1 Corinthians 3:7 MSG

To God Be the Glory!

WHAT TO EXPECT/NOT EXPECT IN WORSHIP (CHRIS)

We now know how to create space and how to cultivate a habit of meeting with God. So, what can we expect to happen during these times of worship?

WHAT CAN WE NOT EXPECT?

- **Physical results / response** (at least not all the time)
- **Romans 9:18** - God will choose when and whom
- **John 16:33** - God does not remove our troubles- He joins us in them!

Remember, we are worshipping in Spirit, not in the physical realm. The most common results / responses will be Spiritual. What does the Spirit influence? Our minds and our hearts.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

- **James 4:8**
- **Psalm 22:3** - God shows up and draws near to you!

SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN EXPERIENCE:

- Joy (Neh. 8:10)
- Peace (Phil. 4:6)
- Healing (Psalm 147:3)
- Restoration (Psalm 71:20)
- The Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13)
- Release of burdens, stress, anxiety (Isa. 41:10)
- Comfort in grief and loss (Mt. 5:4)
- Sense of purpose (Jer. 29:11)
- Forgiveness (Psalm 86:5)
- Rest (Mt. 11:28-30)