

Exploring the Life and Mission of the Church

1 – Worship

Worship: God is calling us to be a ‘worshipping community’ but the worship of the church is not limited to what we like! (nor the worship Leaders’ preferred style/content!). It should reflect what Scripture says God wants from us and allow all to come into God’s presence in corporate worship and to live in it daily. But what is worship?

Consider this selection of Scriptures and note the focus that each offers for our worship :

Psalms 27:4; 84:1-4; 95:1-7, 150 _____
Isaiah 6:1-8 _____
John 4:20-24 _____
Acts 2:1-8, 12-13 _____
Ephesians 5:1-8 _____
Hebrews 10:19-25 _____

Some Important Aspects from above verses:

Central to Life (life forming/changing)	Rejoice in the opportunity
Thanksgiving and Praise	Joyful songs, even through pain
No empty ritual...yet awe & wonder.	Encouraging to all present and...
An attractive witness to those watching on	Corporate in nature
Regularity of joining together	

Guide Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- (a) **Now :** How far does our present worship reflect this Biblical picture:
Is it joyful; Corporate and participative; do we avoid empty ritual yet offer vibrant praise & thanksgiving? Are we Spirit-led; encouraging and attractional? Is our worship central to, and fully influencing of, our life as individual ‘People of God’ and as a church together?
- (b) **In 5-10 years :** In what areas do we less reflect the Bible’s view(s) of worship?
What aspects of our personal and corporate worship do we need to develop in order to ensure it is relevant to all (already inside the church and yet to be welcomed) and glorifying to God?
How do we want to become different in our worship?
- (c) **What can be done?** Having recognised the need for change and development above, what steps will we take immediately to move towards this change?
What further, possibly larger, change do we need to make?
What timescale are we willing to aim for to see change and development happen? What do we need help with and from whom?

Please use the grid on the next page to record the main points of your discussion.

Area of Church Life	Priorities for Development (from (b) above)	Practical Suggestions towards Implementation and likely timescale (from (c) above)
1. Worship		

Sample Readings on Worship

(session 1)

Psalm 27:4

One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.

Psalm 84:1-4

¹How lovely is your dwelling-place, LORD Almighty! ²My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
³Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God.
⁴Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

Psalm 95:1-7

¹Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
²Let us come before God with thanksgiving and lift God up with music and song.
³For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.
⁴God's hands hold the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to God too.
⁵God made the sea and formed the dry land. Both are God's.
⁶Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
⁷for God is our God, and we are the people cared for as the shepherd cares for their sheep

Psalm 150

¹Praise the LORD. Praise God in the sanctuary; in his mighty heavens.
²Give praise for God's acts of power; for all that shows God's surpassing greatness.
³Give praise with the sounding of the trumpet, and with the harp and lyre,
⁴Give praise with tambourine and dancing, with the strings and pipe, ⁵and with the clash of cymbals, praise God with resounding cymbals.
⁶Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of God's robe filled the temple. ²Above were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another:

'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; whose glory fills the whole earth.'

⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.'

⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'

⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'

John 4:20-24

²⁰Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

²¹'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the God is seeking. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

Acts 2 : 1-8, 12-13

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?
¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

Ephesians 5:1-8

¹Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure or greedy person – such a person is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

Hebrews 10:19-25

¹⁹Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.