

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Worship 3: Worshipping God with others



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

Why is worshipping God with other people good for you?



Understanding the information (15 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

In contrast to contemporary culture which can be all about the individual, from the beginning, God calls a whole people to be the best sign of His presence in the world. This continues through the gospels as Jesus forms a community of disciples. The early Christians clearly had a habit of worshipping together: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God....” (Acts 2: 46-47). Paul has a clear expectation that Christians will come together: “In the first place, when you come together as a church...If, therefore, the whole church comes together.” (1 Corinthians 11:18; 14:23). When he encourages Christians to “Rejoice!” he uses a plural verb – in other words he is speaking to them as a community.



Among the many good reasons for worshipping God with others, key reasons would be: As those who are united with Christ, we are a sign and image of Him by being together. “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27). Jesus’ final prayer was that we may be one. Worshipping together is an expression of this unity, and the fulness of His image in us as His body. When we worship together it encourages an expectancy of God’s power and presence in our lives. When Moses entered the tabernacle he knew he was entering the presence of God. In the early church when people prayed and worshipped together, sometimes the buildings shook.

oming together can heighten our awareness of God, and help us to focus on Him. As we worship together, we can encourage each other to continue to worship God in our individual lives.

What is important in worshipping with others?

Worshipping together involves everyone. The word liturgy means “the work of the people.” “When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.” (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Worshipping together involves all of who we are. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)

Worshipping together celebrates variety. It is extremely unlikely that everyone in our church will naturally express worship in exactly the same way. The best group worship would enable people to express their love for God fully without embarrassment or judgment, and to rejoice at variety.

Discuss: What makes you look forward to worshipping with others? How could you encourage other people when you worship with them?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Luke 7: 36-50 in which Jesus receives a woman’s worship.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of how worshipping with others has helped you meet with God.



Optional further material and questions

Share these thoughts or read them together:

What will worshipping together always involve? Whether worshipping together by eating round a table, confessing, praying, studying the Bible, singing, or sharing bread and wine, these elements will always be present in some way: **Being gathered** – we are coming together as Christ’s body. **Hearing God’s word** – we are here to encounter God. **Being at peace with God and each other** – we are here to remember who God is, and who we are as His people. **Thanksgiving** – we are here to give thanks together. **Being sent out** – we come together so that we can be sent out to be with God in the rest of our lives.

Why do we worship by singing together? While singing in choirs has become more popular in recent years through TV programmes, and people sing at concerts and sports events, regular singing in a group is unusual for most people. Yet worship through singing is a natural expression throughout the Bible, with Paul writing that we should address “one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19)

In an interview John Bell explains that we worship God in song... “Because everyone can join in doing it. That sense of being a corporate body comes out in the song of the church more than anything else. We are doing something together for God. Congregational singing is an identity-shaping activity.

In the past...we defined our communities by the songs that we sang....I think we now are in an era in which communities can be reshaped by what we sing. It will also tell us whether we are male-dominated or whether the body of Christ is made in God’s image as much through its female members as its male members.

The church’s song also reminds the world that voices are meant to do other than just talk. A repeated phrase in the Psalms is: Sing to God a new song. The expectation is that this directive applies to everyone, not just the choir or the temple musicians.

You sing primarily to give a gift to God, but you also sing to shape discipleship. If a song is specific about what it means to be a disciple of Christ in the 21st century, it should lead to a change in the way we behave. My frustration is that the church’s singing is full of churchy words. We don’t have songs with a word like economics in them, or a word like kitchen. A substantial amount of biblical witness tells us God is interested in economics. We know that much of Jesus’ time was spent in kitchens. But we are disenfranchised from singing about some realities in his and our lives.”

Responding to God’s leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, “What might God be showing me and how might I respond?” They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, “Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?”



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.
Amen
(Psalm 100)





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Additional notes:

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