

Spiritual Discipline: Worship

February 2015

Worship is our purpose. We were designed (hardwired from the factory) to worship our Creator. The more we focus on God and His infinite worth, we can't help but respond to Him. Just look at the immense starry sky on a moonless night, an indescribable sunset, or behold the breathtaking beauty of a majestic mountain peak, and we are overwhelmed by a spontaneous need to respond in some way. However, as Romans 1:18-25 warns, some people look past the Creator and respond by worshipping the wrong thing. The truth is that if we want to be intentionally growing disciples we must pursue the Spiritual Discipline of Biblical worship.

It is easy for culture and tradition to eclipse the biblical expression of worship. We confuse style, ritual, or personal preference with true spiritual worship. The word "worship" descends from the Saxon word "weorthscype", which later became "worthship". It means to ascribe the proper worth to God, to magnify His worthiness of praise, or better yet, to approach and address God as He is worthy. It goes far beyond the songs, prayers, and rituals offered during a typical church services. It is seeking intimacy with God.

Throughout Scripture we see glimpses of God's people directly encountering God: Adam speaking with God in the Garden, Moses before the burning bush, Moses on Mt Sinai, God leading the Children of Israel as a pillar of fire and cloud. None of these encounters involved what we today might consider elements of worship. Even the first mention of the word "worship" in Scripture, (Gen 22:5 – Where Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac, and tells his servants, "...I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you"), has little in common with how we would describe worship today.

The Spiritual Discipline of worship involves the daily expression of a love for God through praise, adoration, confession, listening, and obedience (See Isaiah 6:1-8). As we gather as a congregation, it is easy to individually go through the motions, outwardly doing the "right things" but still worshipping in vain (Mt 15:8-9 – "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, in vain do they worship me"). Ideally, what happens when God's people gather is a corporate expression of the individual worship they have been living out all week.

Unfortunately, we all face obstacles to worship. A few of them are listed below:

1. Sin – Unconfessed sin blocks the relationship we so richly desire and need.
2. Attitude – A negative, cynical attitude keeps us from seeing God as the audience and ourselves as blessed.
3. Broken Relationships – In Mt 5:23-24, Jesus says that mending a relationship is to be done before worship.
4. Busyness – There is a reason that in Ps 46:10 God said to "Be still and know that I am God." The Message translates it for the world we live in – "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God..."

Over the month of February, live out the spiritual discipline of worship by working through the items below and discussing them with your 222 Group.

- Commit to attend both morning and evening worship services at Shindler Drive for the next month.
- Commit to a personal time of worship each day for the next month, spending at least 5 minutes each day praising God by listing attributes about His character (He is Holy, All Powerful, All Knowing, Perfect, etc), and/or listing the Scriptural names of God (Creator, Sustainer, King of Kings, Alpha and Omega, etc). Focus strictly on **who God is**, and resist the temptation to move too quickly to thanking Him for **what He's done**, or presenting to Him your needs and requests.
- Go to ministrygrid.com and in the "Have a Membership Code?" field type in the following code: **74TMR5**. You will be asked to create a free profile. Then view the following online video on worship – "What Is Worship?"
- Identify the obstacles that prevent you from entering into effective worship and share these with your 222 Group, asking them to pray with you that you may eliminate these distractions.