

True Worship

During October 2003, in homegroups and fellowship groups we will be looking at a short series called '**Worship as a way of life**'. So often we can look at worship being about the songs we sing and not so much about the lives we live. Hopefully, these studies will encourage us to let God speak to us.

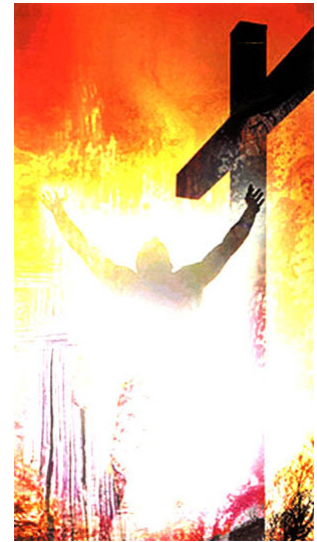
Worship

Get a large sheet of paper in the middle of the room and get everyone to write down words on it that describe God. Then go round and find out why different people wrote what they did.

Worship should matter to you simply because it matters to God. And worship matters to God because He knows He's worthy. That doesn't sound too persuasive in our me-centred culture, but it's true. Worship doesn't begin with us. Worship begins and ends with God. God is worthy of all praise, from all people, for all time.

Read John 4:5-26

Soon into Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman he is disclosing His knowledge of her private life. Jesus takes everything to a deeper level. The question of 'where should we worship?' obviously bothers this woman and Jesus has built, in a short space of time, a level of relationship. His response to the 'where' question is a 'who' answer. The kind of worshippers that God is seeking, are those who worship Him as Father, in spirit and in truth. To worship God 'in spirit' requires that we are alive on the inside, experiencing the life He gives by spiritual birth. Without His life, you can never truly worship. To worship God 'in truth' means to worship Him as He really is and to bring more than our words. So it all starts from an encounter with Jesus at the cross. The Messiah (v25) has come and at the centre of true worship is a wonderful cross ... the cross on which the Son of God died.



Q1. What helps you most to understand and appreciate how the Cross is wonderful? How have you experienced more meaningful worship because of understanding this? How would you describe the place that the Cross should have in our worship?

In Mark 15:33-39, we see a Roman soldier, supposedly an enemy, compelled to proclaim: "Truly this man was the Son of God". Amazing! True worship begins at the foot of the cross. He saw the wonder of it all!

Q2. As Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman about worship, He began with the words, "Believe Me..." In our lives, how much does true worship depend on our believing God?

Q3. Think about all that Jesus told this woman. Which parts of His message to her are most meaningful to you, and why?

As mentioned at the joint homegroup worship evening, 'worship is a participation activity in a spectator culture'. Worship isn't something you attend like a film or concert. Worship is also a verb. Worship is something you do. Worship is all about God, for God and to God.

True worship is a whole-life response to God. The psalms are full of worship expressed as a 'verb' and you can see that true worship is simply catching a sight of the greatness, majesty, splendour, glory and grace of an infinite God. God initiates worship but how big is God?

Read Psalm 95

Q4. Can you share with your group, your most spontaneous experiences of worship that you can recall in your own life? How were you 'seeing' God in these times? What were you finding to be true about Him?

Q5. What practical difference do you think it makes, when we say God initiates worship, not us? Maybe Psalm 95 (or many other psalms) will help show how worship is our response.

Next worship study: 'From our lips and from our lives'