



christ church
moreton

GETTING READY FOR WORSHIP

CHRIST CHURCH
HOME-GROUPS
Summer 2011

Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'

John 8:31-32

Worship is one of the greatest privileges a Christian has. But it is also a great challenge. All too easily we can slip into worshipping God in the way that **we** think is right, rather than in the way that he wants.

If we want to be faithful worshippers, we need to allow God's word to direct us. And the Psalms do that for us; they help us to understand worship from God's perspective. For the next 4 home-groups, before we break for the summer, we will look at some of the psalms. As we do, look for ways in which you can incorporate their teaching into your own life.

The diary for this term looks like this:

Week beginning 13 th June	Home Group
Week beginning 20 th June	Home Group
Week beginning 27 th June	Home Group

Wednesday 6 th July	PRAYER MEETING
Week beginning 11 th July	Home Group

GETTING READY FOR WORSHIP

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PSALM 1

The world or the word?

WELCOME

Who has had the biggest influence on your life?

WORSHIP

Psalm 25 is a prayer for guidance, for forgiveness, and for help. Use the psalm together to ask for the Lord's help at the start of this new series.

WORD

The book of Psalms is full of worship – some people think it was the hymn book of the Jerusalem temple. And Psalm 1 sets the scene for the whole book - in fact it may have been written specifically as an introduction to the book when the Psalms were first brought together. Yet it doesn't say much about the things we often associate with worship - music, praise, prayer. It has much more to

do with how life is lived. And that is where our thinking about worship needs to begin.

- *Do you feel a gap (or chasm!) between "real life" (work, school, family and so on) and your worship?*

Read Psalm 1

The opening verse of Psalm 1 describes actions to be avoided.

- *What significance do you see in the progression from walk to stand to sit?*

Blessed (verse 1) is not a word we use often in ordinary speech. But it could equally well be translated "deeply happy".

- *Why should avoiding those things in verse 1 make us happy?*

- *In practice are there things that "sinners" do which we secretly think would make us happy, rather than the reverse?*

In contrast to the ways of sinners, the psalmist describes the person who delights in God's law (verse 2)

- *What is your response to Scripture (not what you believe about it, but how you feel about it)?*

In verse 3 the psalmist says of the blessed man that "whatever he does prospers". Yet there are millions of Christians around the world who do not seem to prosper - instead they suffer persecution and poverty.

- *How can relating this phrase to verses 2 & 3 help to understand what the psalmist means by prospering?*

The emphasis of this psalm is that there is a difference between the way the world looks at issues, and the way that the Bible looks at them. That is definitely true today. Try thinking through how that difference can be seen in the following examples:-

	The World says	God's Word says
a) Authority		
d) Money		
c) Pluralism		
d) Sex		
e) Anything else?		

(For the world's view, try thinking of what you see on soaps, or read in the paper.
For the Bible's view, try looking at Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 6:19-21; Acts 4:12; Genesis 2:24, though there

are many other relevant passages, and it is important to avoid "proof-texting", or basing a whole idea on one verse.)

- *In what area (if any) do you find it hard to ignore what the world says and listen to God's word?*

Two pictures are used to contrast the righteous (verses 2-3) and the wicked (verses 4-5).

Righteous – like a

Wicked – like

- *What makes these pictures appropriate?*

- *Why does this psalm form an appropriate start to the worship in the book of psalms?*

WORK

We cannot divorce "worship" from the rest of life. The whole of our life needs to be lived for the Lord. What could you be doing this week, so as to be able to worship God with integrity next Sunday?

GETTING READY FOR WORSHIP

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PSALMS 15 & 103 Unworthy, but welcomed

WELCOME

What is the most embarrassing thing you have ever done?

WORSHIP

Psalm 32 is a reminder of the importance of forgiveness, and of the Lord's great mercy. Use these words together.

WORD

The pace of modern life can be frantic. And so as Sunday morning comes round again, it often brings with it the mad rush to get to church on time. Time for quiet can be at a premium. But, how often do we stop to think quite what it is that God wants from us?

- *What frame of mind are you usually in at the start of a service?*

Read Psalm 15.

- *What does this tell you about what God looks for in those who worship him?*

Three of the things listed are concerned with our words – speaks the truth (v.2); no slander on his tongue (v.3); casts no slur (v.3).

- *Why are our words so important?*
- *How does James make the same point in his letter (James 3:9-12)?*

This psalm is about our preparation for worshipping God. But the characteristics which God looks for concern our attitude to others, rather than our attitude to him.

- *Why should the way we treat other people have such an effect on our worship?*

Look through verses 2-5.

- *Are there any things there which strike you as strange requirements in a worshipper?*

In 1 Corinthians 11:28 Paul wrote that "a man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."

- *How might Psalm 15 be used as an aid for self examination?*

- *Do you think that we pay too little attention to the holiness of God when we come to worship him?*

Of course, there is a danger that as we look at ourselves, we could end up feeling so worthless that we no longer want to come and worship God. But we can still come because God forgives us.

Read Psalm 103.

- *How does this psalm express that greatness and depth of salvation? (see especially verses 3-5).*

- *What does God tell us about himself in verses 8-14?*

- *How does this encourage us to worship?*

Look at the contrast between us (verses 15-16) and God (verses 17-19).

- *Does this make you feel better or worse about yourself?*

The psalm begins and ends by saying "Praise the Lord, O my soul".

- *Do you sometimes find that you don't feel like praising God?*

- *How might the content of this psalm encourage you to praise him?*

WORK

Psalm 15 reminds us again that worship cannot be separated from the rest of life – how we treat others will affect our worship of God. But Psalm 103 reminds us of God's boundless forgiveness.

How will you get ready for church this Sunday?

GETTING READY FOR WORSHIP

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PSALMS 73 & 5 When worship is hard

WELCOME

Have you ever lost your way on a journey or on a walk?

WORSHIP

Psalm 27 is a psalm of trust in God. It gives us words to call out to him, even when things around us cause us trouble. Use these words as a prayer for yourselves, especially for any among you who are facing difficulties.

WORD

Sometimes life is full of joy, and praising God seems the most natural thing in the world to do. And then at other times, life can be anything but joyful. The circumstances around us, and the feelings within us, leave us feeling battered and confused.

So what do you do when you just don't feel like worshipping the Lord?

Read Psalm 73

The psalmist admits that his feet had almost slipped.

- *What had caused him to feel that way?*
- *What was his response to all of that (v.13)?*
- *Have you had experiences like that? Or have you had other experiences that have made you feel like the psalmist?*

There is a dramatic change between the first half of the psalm and the second half.

- *What happened to change the way the psalmist felt (v.17)?*
- *Why did this make such a difference?*

To start with, the psalmist's focus is on his troubles. At the end it is on the Lord.

- *What things does he remember about the Lord?*
- *Why would remembering these help him to deal with his doubts?*

Read Psalm 5

Again, an individual who is having a tough time of it. David is faced with enemies.

- *Who or what do you think these enemies were?*

- *What enemies do we face as Christians today?*

David prays that in the face of these enemies, the Lord would lead him.

- *Why might our enemies cause us to lose our way as Christians?*

- *Once again, where does David go in order to find a correct focus for his life?*

- *Have you had any experience of going to church when you are struggling, and finding that the worship helped you?*

- *Are there things we need to do differently in our services to help one another find that renewed hope in times of trouble?*

WORK

David and Asaph found hope when they went to the house of the Lord. Today, that doesn't just mean going into a building; it means coming together in the body of Christ. It is as we do that those who are struggling should find help.

Are there any known to you at Christ Church who are going through the sort of experience David and Asaph had? How can you help them to have their hope in the Lord renewed?

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PSALM 95 & 150 Worship forever

WELCOME

List 5 things you thank God for.

WORSHIP

Psalm 100 is a psalm of praise. Praise the Lord that he is our creator, that he is our shepherd, that he is our faithful God.

WORD

The book of Psalms began with a preparation for worship. It ends with an outpouring of praise. But before we look at the praise filled Psalm 150, there is still the question of what does it actually mean to worship God.

- *What circumstances or feelings in the last year have made you want to praise God?*

Read Psalm 95.

- *What sort of an image do the first 2 verses give of the worship which should be given to God?*

Worship was to spring from a realisation of who God is.

- *What picture of God is given in verses 3-5?*

- *How does thinking about God's greatness push us into worship?*

God is both "our Father" and also the creator and ruler of the universe.

- *Which of these do you find it easiest to relate to?*

- *What response does the writer of this psalm expect to come from his reminder of who God is and what he has done? (verse 6)*

- *True worship can only come from a living relationship with God. How does the psalm describe that relationship (v.7)*

So far we have seen that worship will involve joy and thanksgiving, humility and awe. But verses 8-11 introduce another element which is at the heart of true worship - listening to God and obeying him (Meribah & Massah are referred to in Exodus 17)

- *How do these verses underline the importance of the Bible in worship?*

- *Is it possible to worship God without listening to what he says in his word?*

Read Psalm 150.

- *Verse 1 tells us where the Lord is to be praised.*
- *How do the terms "in his sanctuary" and "in his mighty heavens" convey the scope of where he should be praised?*

- *Verse 2 tells us why he is to be praised. What reasons does the psalmist give?*

- *What reasons of your own can you add?*

➤ *Verses 3-5 tell us how to praise the Lord. As you read these verses, what kind of scene do you imagine?*

➤ *How does this kind of worship compare with your own?*

➤ *Verse 6 tells us who should praise the Lord. How does this act as a spur to our evangelism?*

There are no shortcuts to praise. If we maintain a sensitivity to the psalms which have preceded this one, we will realise that praise cannot happen in a vacuum – it flows from a life that is based on God's word and an acknowledgment of God's greatness. No matter what else happens, these things are unchanging. But on the way to Psalm 150 there are many psalms which speak of the tears and doubts which find their way into our lives.

➤ *Have there been difficult circumstances in your life which have found their way into praise?*

WORK

Augustine said that a "Christian should be a hallelujah from head to foot."

What can we do to encourage each other to become praising people?

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and
strength and honour and glory and praise!"
Then I heard every creature in heaven
and on earth and under the earth
and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:
"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honour and glory and power,
for ever and ever!
Amen.
Revelation 4:12-13*

Our home-groups are finished now until the autumn. But that shouldn't mean that you no longer meet with each other. The fellowship and encouragement that should be found in home-group don't depend on official home-group dates and material. So plan now to meet up through the summer.

CHRIST CHURCH, MORETON

We want to be a **W**elcoming Church
Because Jesus welcomed all who came to him

an **E**vangelsing Church
*Because we believe that everyone has the right to
hear the Good News of Jesus*

a **L**oving Church
*Because Jesus commanded his followers to love
one another*

a **L**earning Church
*Because we are in the business of making
disciples, and disciples must always be learners*