

Worship our greatest privilege

What a great privilege to be invited to join with heavenly voices in proclaiming God's holiness and responding to God's love! In worship we re-connect with the One in whose image we are created. In worship we experience God's powerful presence and our individuality is re-formed into the church.

Worship has been described as drama with the congregation as actors who communicate praise, confession, and petition, with God as the audience who hears and responds, and with worship leaders as prompters who facilitate encounters with God.

Phases of worship include

Preparing - Mark 12:30

God must be the center of our worship. God centeredness requires preparation. Because the first Christians were Jews, they incorporated Jewish practices into their worship. Christians still use some of those practices. Worship, in the Jewish tradition, is the focal point of every week. Preparations are made during the three days prior to the Sabbath, while the three days following the Sabbath are used for reflection. Readyng our minds, hearts, and bodies to focus entirely on God leads to worship filled with meaning and joy. Then worship becomes the very best time of the week.

Expressing adoration for who God is - Psalm 99:1a,3

We gather for worship with confidence that God is waiting to welcome us. What a delightful miracle that the majestic and mysterious, powerful and perfect One is eager for our arrival. God's very being has always inspired awe and adoration. Praise comes not from our feelings but from the character of God. With expressions of adoration worship becomes an awe-ful and holy event.

Commemorating God's covenant - Psalm 105:5

Throughout history God has endeavored to save us from self-serving, self-destructive behavior. Christians affirm the Bible as a record of God's loving

actions on our behalf. Both the Old and New Testaments include reminders that faithfulness involves worshiping only God as well as remembering what God has done. Remembering what God has done is crucial to understanding and appreciating who God is. Learning of God's actions helps us to find our places in God's story by connecting us with past, present, and future believers. What inspiring company!

Celebrating with gratitude - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18a

Christ's resurrection confirms God's new covenant with us, the promise of new life in Christ. When we begin to understand the tremendous significance of the resurrection we live in deep, overflowing gratitude. The fullest expression of gratitude is giving God first place in every aspect of our lives.

Communing with God - Psalm 139:23-24

All people are welcomed into God's presence to engage in intimate communication. This communication allows us to expose the dark places in our lives to Christ's light and enables us to hear the sacred sound of God's voice. In communion (intimate communication) we realize the full blessing of God's claim, "I have called you by name and you are mine." We grow into perfect harmony with God through communion.

Building up Christ's church - 1 Corinthians 14:26

Encountering God together bonds believers into one body, Christ's church. Brethren believe in the priesthood of all believers, giving each believer the privilege and responsibility of building up the body. We respond to the call to be priests when we allow God to speak the good news of Christ through us. What an honor God bestowed on us by making us stewards of the gospel!

Empowering resurrection living - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Reflecting on the worship experience enhances our inspiration and power for resurrection living. Worship is one of God's many gifts that function reciprocally - worship empowers resurrection living and resurrection living empowers worship.

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