

# Shepherding Worship

## PURSUING GOD'S PRESENCE - Small Group Resource

Worshiping God together can be an awesome practice as a small group. The collective focus on God through reading, song and reflection can both focus your group and fulfill the instructions that we find in God's word to worship the one true God as a church (Psalm 29:1-2, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19). Through worship, we delight in God, God delights in us, we draw close to God, He draws close to us, God ministers to us, God's enemy flees, and we declare God's greatness to the world. [1]

Worship is the focusing of our hearts, our minds, our words and our actions on God, honouring Him for who He is and what He has done. All believers are called to worship, regardless of our talent or comfort zones. As a lay pastor and shepherd, you are to guide your group to worship but you don't have to do it alone! Consider how you can empower others in your small group to use their spiritual gifts in worship.

### *Worship Through Scripture*

Reading a Psalm at the beginning of your time together is a great way to introduce worship to your group:

- Prayerfully pick a Psalm before your meeting begins.
- Open in prayer, welcoming God to meet with you and to receive your worship.
- Read through the Psalm slowly and carefully, taking moments to pause and reflect when the psalmist reflects on attributes or actions of God.
- There may also be moments throughout and at the end of the Psalm when you can pause and encourage the group to pray a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God in response to the Psalm.

What other passages of Scripture could be used for worship in small group? There are many passages that testify of God's attributes, promises and blessings. Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight these as you read your Bible.

## ***Worship Through Music***

After a study of God's Word, there is a great opportunity to worship God through music in response to your study and discussion:

- Do you have anyone who is musical and would take the challenge to lead in song?
  - Talk with them well in advance (a few days minimum) to allow them to physically and mentally prepare and to discuss the songs in which they would like to lead your group. Do those songs declare truth? See Heartland's playlist for some great song ideas.
  - Pick songs beforehand when first starting out. Your group may eventually get to a comfort level where songs can be chosen in the moment as the Holy Spirit leads.
  - You can display the lyrics on a TV screen (using your laptop, tablet or phone) or ask your group to find the lyrics on the internet if they do not know the words (using their phone or tablet).
- You can play the worship music on the TV (if using YouTube worship videos that include the lyrics on them), or on a separate computer or speaker.

## ***Worship Through Prayer***

Another way that we can worship God beyond music or the Word is through a time of worshipful prayer.

- Encourage your group to tell God the things that they are thankful for - this can be relationships, material possessions, spiritual blessings and gifts or experiences.
- Encourage them to think about what they know about God and declare those things together (Ephesians 5:19-20). Reminding each other of the things of God and honouring God for them is worship!
- Pray His attributes like "God you are good," "You are merciful," "You are just," etc.
- Pray His titles/names like "Alpha and Omega," "Faithful and True," "Prince of Peace," "Cornerstone," etc.
- Praise him for the ways you have seen Him at work in your life.

## Small Group Dialogue

- What does worship mean to you?
- How does scripture define worship?
- What does scripture say about how (or when or who) we should worship?
- What kind of worship pleases God?
- What does worship look like in our culture?
- What helps you to express your worship?
- What obstacles would hinder your worship? How do you deal with them?
- How would you like to grow in this area?
- As a small group, what can we do to encourage and support each other in this?

### Additional Leader Resources

- “Habit – Prayer” & “Habit – Thankfulness,” Daily Self-Leadership Habits, TrainedUp
- "Prayer in Small Groups," Leader Training Workshop, TrainedUp
- Heartland Alliance Church YouTube channel (stand-alone worship songs and the worship segment of online services are options you can use for music).
- *How To Worship a King: Prepare Your Heart. Prepare Your World. Prepare The Way* by Zach Neese
- *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* by Gary Thomas

#### Footnotes:

[1] Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004. (pp. 1005-1009)

