

Original Worship

Worship the Way God Intended

John 4:23-24

Part I: An overview of worship and praise.

A. What is Worship?

1. The English word worship originally meant “the condition of being worthy”.
2. The primary idea of the Greek word which is translated worship in the fourth chapter of John is reverence.
3. What is God worthy of? He is worthy of our reverence! Let’s talk about what exactly this means.
 - a. First, let’s examine what worship does not mean. True Worship may never be equated with the following words: dry, dead, boring, tradition, phony, passionless, heartless, joyless, formalism, or drudgery.

By the way, the last word means the following: dull, irksome, and fatiguing work: uninspiring and menial labor-Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

It is very possible to outwardly and formally honor God and not worship Him. Isaiah 29: 13 “And the Lord said: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,”

- b. Second, let’s look at what worship does mean.

Jesus taught what it meant to reverence God when He said that worship is concerned with spirit and truth.

The word spirit here does not mean the Holy Spirit. Jesus is saying that true worship flows from our spirit. In other words, worship is invisible and immaterial. God honoring worship flows from the inner, invisible part of our human makeup. Worship is a matter of the human spirit gazing God ward. Psalm 103: 1 “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!”

When a person reverences God in their spirit, they experience the following:

- a. **Humility:** Isaiah 37: 16 “O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.”
- b. **Joy:** Psalm 16: 11 “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”
- c. **Love:** Psalm 5:11 “But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you.”
- d. **Awe:** Psalm 33:8 “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!”
- c. **Peace:** Isaiah 26:3 ““You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”

d. **Satisfaction:** Jeremiah 31:25 “For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish.”

The spirit that worships, reverences God in pain and in victory!

Job 1:21 “And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Jesus also said that worship must be done in truth. This means that we must worship the one and only true God and do so with a soul captured by the truth of Scripture.

I Thessalonians 1: 9 “For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,”

Psalm 119:161 “...but my heart stands in awe of your words.”

Worship in short is being enthralled by the true God.

Worship of the heart is expressed in various ways: the way we talk, the way we pray, the way we handle money, the way we prioritize the activities in our life, etc. One of the ways that we express our worship is through singing and music.

B. What is praise?

This is where we run into the word praise. Praise is the verbal, audible, and physical way we express our heart filled with worship to God. Praise can involve, clapping, singing, shouting, dancing, talking, lifting our hands, and playing instruments. Praise is the release valve for worship.

1. Psalm 47:1 “To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!”
2. Psalm 30:4 “Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.”
3. Psalm 33:1 “Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.”
4. Psalm 150:4 “Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!”
5. Psalm 35:28 “Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness and of your praise all the day long.”
6. Psalm 63:4 “So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.”
7. Psalm 150

Part 2: City Light Church Worship Name.

Label: Original Worship

A. He is the originator of worship.

Isaiah 43:7 “everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Exodus 34:14 “(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),”

Did God originate worship because He is needy? No. He instituted worship for two reasons.

1. Because He is infinitely superior and greater than any other being. He is the eternal God to whom all of creation depends on and owes its existence to. To not worship is to ignore the very one on whom our next breathe depends. It is only natural and fitting for God to institute worship.

2. Because he wanted to bless us. When we worship He is glorified and we are blessed. We are made to worship. When we worship God, we find our very reason for existing.

John Piper- “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”

Robert Harden- “God is the only being who can receive worship for the benefit of the one worshipping.”

B. He is the original object of worship.

Before Satan’s heart was found to be with sin, before there was humanity immersed in wickedness, before there was an idol in any form, God alone was worshipped. He calls us to come back and worship only Him, the way it originally was!

Motto: Worship the Way God Intended

A. Statement of His Desire-John 4:23 "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him."

B. A Command for Us to Follow-John 4:24 “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Part 3: City Light Church Music Vision.

We are committed to a music style that is soulfully modern and both free and expressive, yet structured.

A. Genre- Modern

1. We believe that it is important to actually pick a certain style of music and stick with it. We are not interested in a “blended” music service with an awkward transition from one style to another. As one person put it, “when trying to please everyone, one ends up pleasing no one.” The style we have chosen is “modern.”

2. This does not mean that we refuse to sing older songs or hymns. It means that while we will usually retain the original melody of the older songs, to make them recognizable and enjoyable to those who have sung them, we will fit them into our genre of music and flow of selected songs. As a side note, what is the

purpose of changing the original melody if younger and new people to the faith never heard them anyway and it will turn off the ones who are familiar with them?

3. Being modern means that we believe that the Lord uses new genres of music over the time expanse of history as a tool for worship. We do not want to get stuck in one era. This means that we will need to constantly be progressing and re-evaluating over time.

B. Soulful Worship-We are interested in songs that minister to the soul and flow easily from the soul.

1. We believe firmly that there is nothing sacred about the “older tried and true” songs. While it is a good testament to any song that it withstands the test of time, the age nor the era of any song gives it any significance over other songs with other ages from different eras.

2. While we reject the idea that the only songs that should be sung are directly from the Bible (i.e. Psalms), we do believe that all songs that will be sung in the worship service should always be evaluated through the following grid.

a. Is the song speaking to God, about God, or to others in such a way that magnifies God and directs our gaze toward Jesus!

b. Is it Biblically informed?

- Does the song say a lot about nothing meaningful or has very little that is spiritually stimulating?
- Does the song tend to be very centered on me or is it God centered?
- It is a good thing to focus on songs that are lyrically capturing.

C. Flow of the music service-In leading worship several factors must be considered. There must be a flow to the songs.

1. There should be a sense that it is not sing-stop, sing-stop, etc., but a constant flow. This means that as the worship band is encouraging worship even between the songs, using prayer, praise talk, continued music, spontaneous singing, etc. The worship band should prepare as much as possible for worshipful transitions.

2. The worship band should think about the “singability” of any given song. Just because a song has lots of words and is very technical does not make it a good song for public worship. Neither is a song bad just because it has few words and a simple melody. We must not forget that some songs in the Scripture are simple and repetitive.

3. The worship band must not forget that people need to be emotionally moved and encouraged. This means that there should be a flow even in the tempo’s and melodies of the song. It is usually appropriate to start with exuberant songs. Songs that are happy and have a good beat are excellent to begin with. Yet, within the flow of the service there often should be contemplative and even somber songs. However, an all somber service is a real downer!

B. Quality-It is our aim to have quality worship time in music.

II Chronicles 34:12 “And the men did the work faithfully. Over them were set Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to have oversight. The Levites, **all who were skillful with instruments of music,**”

1. Good musicians and singers are necessary to a good worship band. We will neither bring someone onto the band simply because of family relations, emotional ties, clicks, or friendships! What is a “good musician or singer”? That is ultimately the decision of the worship leader with consideration to the thoughts and input of other existing band members.
2. Prospective band members will be interviewed by the worship leader.
3. Practice is essential to having a well done worship service.
4. It will be the churches aim to financially provide for the various needs of the band so that they might be at their very best. This would include sound equipment, seminars, computer software, etc.

C. Expressive and Free-

1. The worship band is not performing for the audience, but leading the congregation into worship. It is the worship leader’s responsibility to encourage engagement in this part of the service.
2. We do not want to have a “hands in the pockets at all times”, barely audible worship time. We want to see Biblical expressions of praise, as previously listed, fully embraced at City Light Church. This must be communicated by the pastor and encouraged and embraced by the worship band.

D. Personally Prepared-

1. Before practice it is a good practice to spend some time in prayer together as a band.
2. During the week, the practice of reading the Bible and spending time in personal prayer and worship is encouraged. By the way, worshipping often takes place in the car, while doing dishes, or mowing the lawn (Just don’t read your Bible while driving!).
3. A right relationship with God is necessary to one leading in worship. The person who is not right with God does not worship God. If one, himself, does not worship God, how can he lead others to do so?

This means:

- All those who will lead in public worship must have received Christ as their Lord and Savior. This does not mean that they are living perfectly or have every item in their life in place. This also does not mean that they need to be a strong, mature believer. It simply means they love Jesus! We expect more from the actual worship leader(s) than the band members.
- Even for those who are not saved, we strongly encourage them to practice with the band (if they musically qualified to), develop relationships with the band members, and begin the journey, if they desire, to become a part of the worship band.
- While we encourage various styles of dress, all clothing must be modest.
 1. No skirts or dresses above the top of the knee.

2. No cleavage revealing tops.
3. No jeans or pants that are ripped near the crotch or rear end.
 - All policies within the worship band are subject to the policies of the church constitution, the pastor of the church, and the Eastern Pennsylvania district of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

I Corinthians 14:40 “But all things should be done decently and in order.”