



## NEW LIFE GROUP - Session 4 - Participants

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### WORSHIP

#### Session 4 content

- Read out a favourite scripture verse or passage.
- Short prayers of thankfulness and worship.
- What do we see, hear, feel or think, to encourage sharing. (Prophecy/words of knowledge - hearing from God).
- Start a song or suggest one in the moment or one that means something to us.
- Look for healing and the miraculous amongst us.
- Pray for and encourage the gift of tongues (remember you can interpret your own tongue!).
- When we have times of personal encounter - share what we have experienced.

Very simple...With this one we just have two parts to move through.

**Part One.** Introduction to the evening. We will bring a theme and then create discussion around it. There are no fixed questions

**Part Two.** Time of Encounter and presence.

### PRAISE - WORSHIP - PRESENCE - ENCOUNTER

Ruth Ward-Heflin, in her book titled '**Experiencing the Atmosphere of Heaven**' writes...

**"We praise until the spirit of worship comes, we worship until the Glory comes and then we stand in the Glory..."**

We all long for times like this, either corporately as we gather with others or in our own personal moments. God loves to meet with us even more than we long to meet with him, he's always ready, always willing to speak to us in many ways and loves our company. Let's look at some things that we can learn and understand to help us with this...

**So, we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God,**

**and God abides in him.**

1 John 4:16

**But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.**

**Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them.**

**They cried to You, and were delivered;**

**They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.**

Psalm 22: 3-5

## **PART ONE**

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### **Theme 1. PRAISE**

**What is Praise?** Praise is thanking God for what he has done, is doing or what he is about to do. Seen and unseen. There are many things that can inspire us to praise God. His creation and nature around us, his goodness in our lives and in the lives of others, provision, health, change in circumstances, friendships and family, the list is endless. Praise does not always cost us anything, as it is the truthful acknowledgement of the righteous acts of God. We are commanded to praise God along with the angels and the heavenly hosts (Psalm 103 v 20-21). In scripture, praise is usually presented as boisterous, joyful and uninhibited. We can express praise in words, singing, shouting, dancing and with musical instruments.

**Praise the Lord!**

**Praise God in his sanctuary;**

**praise him in his mighty heaven!**

**Praise him for his mighty works;**

**praise his unequalled greatness!**

**Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn;**

**praise him with the lyre and harp.**

**Praise him with the tambourine and dancing;**

**praise him with strings and flutes!**

**Praise him with a clash of cymbals;**

**praise him with loud clanging cymbals.**

**Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord!**

**Praise the Lord!**

Psalm 150

**But what about when our circumstances seem to dictate that we have very little to be thankful for? When it can cost us to praise him!!**

**“Even though there can often be a lot of mystery in our lives, God’s nature does not change and it never will. The enemy will point at our circumstances to try and get us to**

**believe lies about who God is, but our God never changes. Our God is perfect in every way and He cannot be anything but perfect. Our God is always good and always working everything together for the good of those who love Him.”**

Wendy Mann - ‘Naturally Supernatural’

**‘Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God’**

David - ‘Psalm 43’

David reveals to us that how and when we praise God is not dependent on our feelings or circumstances. It is a choice and he commanded himself to praise despite (**‘yet’**) what was going on around him. David wrote this Psalm when he was under attack from his enemies and felt that God had rejected and abandoned him. For David, knowing God as his ‘God’ and as his ‘Saviour’ was all he could find to praise God for in that moment...but that was enough!

When we praise God despite our circumstances and focus on what the word of God tells us about his true nature, we then have access to the inner places of His sanctuary. Praise is vital and powerful, it is our ‘pass-key’ and with it we go through the gates and into his courtyards. Our worship then takes us into the ‘Holy of Holies’.

**‘Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise’**

Psalm 100 v 4

 **Discuss any thoughts around Praise**

## **Theme 2. WORSHIP**

**What is Worship? Worship** is focussed on who God **IS** and **not** what **he has done**. Therefore, like praise it is essential that we understand and fill our minds with knowledge about the character and the true nature of God.

**‘...true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.’**

**Jesus - John 4 v 23-24**

What do these verses tell us....?

- What we fill our minds with, will reflect how we worship. Again we are back to loving the word of God and being passionate about making that a priority in our lives. Our head knowledge and our understanding of God, what is true about him, ourselves and the destiny we have as a child of God - really counts!

- Because God is spirit we need to be filled and engage with the Holy Spirit to truly worship Him. The word 'Spirit' in this scripture is with a capital 'S'. It is not about our spirit/soul/inner person connecting to God. It is about the Holy Spirit who also lives within us, enabling us to worship God in the way that God requires. Deep stuff!
- It is a '**must**' to worship God in this way. A command. There is no other way to worship God.
- God '**seeks**' out this '**kind of**' worshippers, which implies there are different '**kinds**' of worshippers and ways of worshipping that will not draw Him close to us. We '**must**' worship in this way if we want Him to **seek** us out. What **kind** of worshippers do we want to be?

It is impossible to worship God and something else at the same time. Worship should only be reserved for God.

'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'

**Duet 4 v 13 & Luke 4 v 8**

Jesus quotes this verse when Satan tempts Jesus to worship him. Idolatry (the worship of anything else other than God), gives the demonic freedom to influence us.

Worship goes beyond praise. To truly worship, we must be humble before God and surrender every part of our lives to His control. We must totally adore Him. Through worship we realign our priorities with God's and acknowledge Him once more as the Lord of our lives. Worship is intertwined with surrender, it is an attitude of the heart.

 **Discuss any thoughts around Worship.**

### **Theme 3. PRESENCE - ENCOUNTER - GLORY**

**How do we experience the Glory of God?** We could describe the **Glory of God**, as him being present amongst us. Perhaps this is why the previous verses about how we worship are so important. When we truly worship him he **seeks** us out and then we **know** that God has turned up to meet with us. Bill Johnson explains this very well in his book 'Hosting the Presence' .....

***“Why invite God to come when he is already here?” It’s a good question. It makes no sense whatsoever to pray that way unless we understand that there are different***

***measures and dimensions of God's presence. When He is here, there is always more to come. It's important to hunger for and invite that increase...***

***Isaiah... 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple'. The word filling implies that His robe filled the temple, but then continued to fill it...There is always more!'***

Some measures of His presence - each one is an increase of the previous. (Bill Johnson)

- ***God first inhabits everything and holds all things together. He is everywhere, the glue that holds creation in place.***
- ***A second dimension of God's presence is His indwelling Holy Spirit in the lives of those that have been born again. We are His 'Temple of the Holy Spirit'. (1 Cor 6 v 19).***
- ***A third dimension can occur when believers gather in His name. He is 'there in their midst' (Matt 18 v 20). An exponential increase comes in.***
- ***A fourth measure or increase occurs when God's people praise Him for He says 'He inhabits the praises of His people' (Ps 22 v 3). He is already in our midst as we are gathered but He chooses to manifest Himself more powerfully in that atmosphere.***
- ***A fifth dimension is seen when the Temple of Solomon was dedicated. God came so profoundly that the priests were incapacitated. (1 Kings 8 v 10-11). No one could even stand, let alone play instruments or sing, they were completely undone at that measure of Presence.***


So can we '**Stand in His Glory**'? At that point, when God really turns up in measure and we are so aware of His presence, we can 'Be still and know that He is God.' We could stand in awe, kneel in adoration or prostrate ourselves in total submission. We can hear his voice whispering to us. He has sought us out and found his 'true worshippers'. Anything could happen!



**Discuss personal experiences of the presence of God**

#### **Theme 4. MOVING IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**Spiritual Gifts.** As always, when it comes to our understanding as a disciple, we are not left uninformed or unguided as to how we can move in the spiritual gifts when we gather together or in our personal spaces.

 **Discuss anything that was discovered in last week's session - has someone discovered a gift they are passionate about and have begun to move in - is there anything they would like to know more about?**

#### **Theme 5. MAKE IT PERSONAL**

 **What can help us when we gather in presence and worship, corporately & in a personal way?**

<https://www.risebetransformed.org/inspirationandblogs/come-away-with-me>

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### **PART TWO**

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**Move into a time of PRAISE - WORSHIP - PRESENCE - ENCOUNTER**