

True Worship

Defining worship:

DISCUSSION - what is worship?

If a non-Christian friend asked you 'What is worship?', what would you say?

Worship words:

Proskynein - homage

Latreuein - service

Leitourgein - priestly service

Sebomai - reverence/awe

Peterson's definition:

Why do we need to think about this?

'Contemporary Christians obscure the breadth and depth of the Bible's teaching on this subject when they persist in using the word 'worship' in the usual, limited fashion, applying it mainly to what goes on in Sunday services'.

David Peterson, *Engaging with God*, p.18

Created for Worship

- Worship in the garden – Genesis 1&2
- Worship in heaven

'...the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, *for* you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Revelation 4:10-11

God is worthy of our worship, but...

'[God's] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they (that is, mankind) are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him...they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.'

Romans 1:20-21, 25

Saved for Worship

1 Peter 1:22, 4:2; Heb 9:14; Eph 2:10

'[Jesus] died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.'

2 Cor 5:15

'...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God...'

1 Thess 1:9

1) Engaging with God in the Old Testament:

The goal of salvation from Egypt:

'...when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall *serve* [Gk. 'latreuein'] God on this mountain.'

Exodus 3:12

'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness...let us go a three-days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God..."'

Exodus 5:1, 3

- **In every area of life**

'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Exodus 19:5-6

'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve [Gk. 'latreuein'] the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord...'

'You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve [Gk. 'latreuein'] him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise.'

'...if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve [Gk. 'latreuein'] him with all your heart and with all your soul, he will give the rain for your land in its season...'

Deut 10:12, 20; 11:13

- **Through the sacrificial system**

- Tabernacle/Temple

'The tabernacle was to stand in the centre of the camp and provide the means by which all of life was to be related to God...It represented the holiness of the God who dwelt in their midst. In concrete form it expressed the truth that human beings could not come into his presence on their own terms. The complex provisions for sacrifice in connection with the tabernacle were the cultic means for acknowledging God's Kingship or the protocol by which Israel was enabled to approach the Holy One and to live in His presence.'

Peterson, p.32

- Priests

'Of Levi [Moses] said: ...They shall teach Jacob your rules, and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar.'

Deut 33:10

- Sacrifices

See Leviticus 1-10!

- **Led by the King**

'Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole-heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the King also rejoiced greatly.'

1 Chronicles 29:9

Israel's failure to worship

Isaiah 1:11-17; Amos 4:4-13; Hos. 8:11-13; Jer 7:21-26; Ez 16:15-21

Promises that all nations will one-day worship God

Isaiah 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-5

2) Engaging with God in the New Testament:

- **Through Jesus**

- The true temple

'And the Word became flesh and dwelt [lit. 'tabernacled'] among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.'

John 1:14, 18

'Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body.'

John 2:19-21

- The true high priest

'we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.'

Heb 8:1-2. See also 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20; 9:11

'there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

1 Tim 2:5

- The true sacrifice

'every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God...For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.'

Heb 10:11-14

In Spirit and Truth:

'The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'"

John 4:19-24

Summary:

'New-covenant worship is essentially the engagement with God that He has made possible through the revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ and the life He has made available through the Holy Spirit.'

Peterson, p.100

- **Led by Jesus**

EXERCISE: In what different ways does Jesus lead us in worship?

- He is the supreme example of a life of worship - Mark 10:45, 1 Peter 2:21 etc.
- He defeats our enemies - Col 2:15
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- **In every area of life**

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship [Gk. 'latreuein'].

²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.'

Romans 12:1-2

'The life that is truly acceptable to God is the life consecrated to him through self-abandonment to the saving work of Jesus Christ. It is the life that seeks to serve him in the context of everyday relationships and responsibilities, in the power of His Holy Spirit.'

Peterson, p.178

EXERCISE: Transformed worship language

Look up the verses below (the first 5 of which all use the Greek word 'leitourgein' - priestly service) and see what Paul uses them to describe.

Rom 15:16

Phil 2:30

Phil 2:17

2 Cor 9:12

Phil 2:25

2 Tim 4:6

Some implications:

- Worship is impossible apart from Jesus
- No more holy places
- Worship drives mission

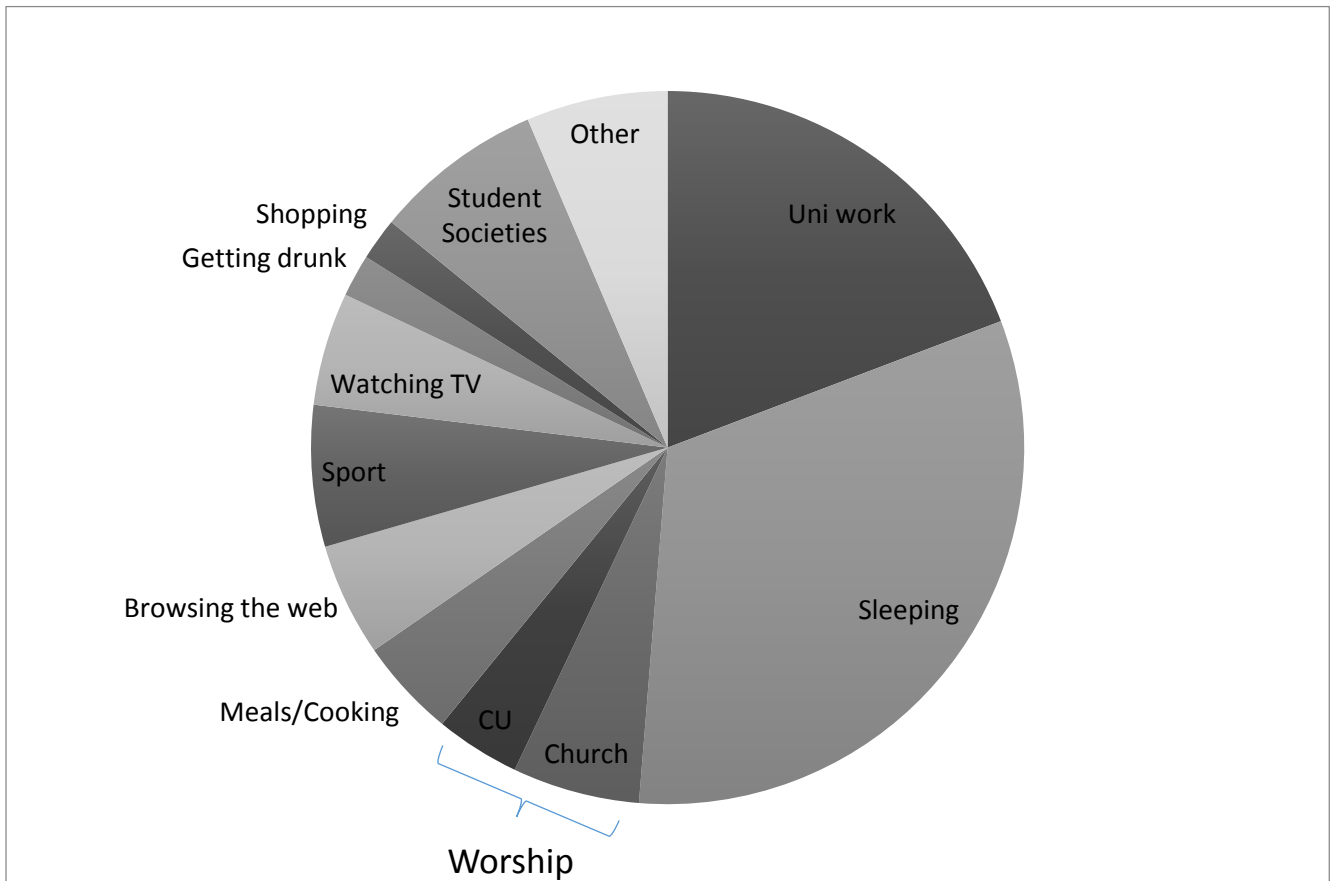
'Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't.'

John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad*, p.15

- Wholeheartedness

EXERCISE: 'The worship pie-chart'

How might what we've looked at affect how we view/spend our time? You might want to make changes to the pie-chart accordingly.



3) Engaging with God at church

'You cannot judge a church's worship by what happens in the hour or so when they meet on a Sunday'

Vaughan Roberts, *True Worship*, p.24

What is the church gathering for?

'...in the New Testament there is a stunning indifference to the outward forms and places of worship. And there is, at the same time, a radical intensification of worship as an experience that pervades all of life.'

John Piper, *"Worship God!"*

On sung congregational worship:

- Not entering God's presence

"Praise takes you into the presence of God."

"Every time the praise and worship teams ... begin to praise God, His presence comes like a flood."

*'Tabernacle is a cross-church gathering place for Christians hungry to **encounter the presence of God**. Everyone welcome, no matter age, church or denomination, there is space to come and **be transformed by encountering the presence of God** through intimate worship, passionate prayer and spirit led ministry'* (emphasis original)

'The Bible never teaches that a feeling can bring us into the presence of God. If that had been possible, God would have sent us a musician rather than a saviour. Only Christ can take us into the Most Holy Place in heaven, where we have direct access to the Father through Him.'

Roberts, p.68

- Purpose is both vertical and horizontal
 - Praise
 - Reminding/teaching one another

'...be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart...'

Eph 5:19

'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.'

Col 3:16

- Who is the worship leader?

'Preaching about Christ must be at the heart of a Christian theology of worship. As in the Old Testament, the word of God is central to a genuine encounter with the Lord. Those who are concerned with God-honouring worship will be concerned about the proclamation of the gospel, in the world and in the church, in public teaching and in private dialogue. If worship is an engagement with God on the terms that He proposes and in the way that He alone makes possible, preaching Christ is a key to that engagement.'

Peterson, p.144

Some Applications:

- Give thanks - worship is only possible through Jesus!
- Give up your life - in obedience & gospel ministry
- The gospel motivates our worship

'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, **by the mercies of God**, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.'

Romans 12:1

'An understanding of God's mercy to us is the fuel that energises and empowers our worship in all parts of life.'

Roberts, p.17

'The Biblical gospel...is like fuel in the furnace of worship. The more you understand it, believe it, and rely on it, the more you adore God both for who he is and for what he has done for us in Christ.'

Greg Gilbert, *What is the Gospel?*, p.21