

St Stephen's Shottermill | House Groups
UP: Worship and Word

I. WORSHIP

❖ **Giving God what he is worth – 'worth-ship'**

❖ **Together** with other Christians (Corporate)

❖ **Individual** – our whole lives

❖ Need both – no good just worshipping on Sunday or equally, no good just saying it's private and not share with others

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Mark 12:30

❖ **Love God with all that we've got** – our time, talents, energy, money, bodies ... everything!!

"I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" Psalm 34:1

❖ **Our lifestyle** should be one of praise & thanksgiving *"living sacrifices"* – Romans 12:1-2
There are different ways to worship ...

❖ Use all of **Senses**

❖ **Imagination, music, silence, poetry, singing, creative arts, incense**

❖ **Psalms** – range of emotions, **dance, using our bodies, listen to CD's ...**

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks" John 4:23

❖ In Spirit: **our spirit's communicating with God's Spirit**

❖ In Truth: **through Jesus who is the** *"way the truth and the life"* John 14:6

❖ **The times when we** feel most real **or** most ourselves **are when we are** worshipping in spirit and truth **because we were created to love & worship God**

Practical ideas for worship in house groups

❖ Put on a track from your favourite worship CD or a tape. Sing along or simply 'be' with God. Become aware of his Presence and his love for you.

❖ Read a Psalm out loud slowly. Pause at particularly significant bits.

❖ Do the same with the Lord's Prayer. Take it line by line

❖ Construct a simple cross. Use this as a focus for worship.

❖ Write out the name 'Jesus' in bold block capitals. Put it on the mantelpiece or some other focal point. Again allow people to meditate on the name.

❖ Experiment with body posture! Kneel as a sign of penitence. Stand as you wait on God.

❖ Encourage people to write out their most heart-felt prayers to God as a preliminary to worship. Collect their slips of paper and, without reading them, place them at 'the foot' of a cross as an offering to God.

❖or simply encourage people to listen to God and write out the replies.

❖ Get a big sheet of paper and invite people to write down words that describe God. The begin thanking God for who He is.

❖ Light a candle, play some music, think about Jesus – the light of the world!

❖ Bring some art materials and get everyone to draw or paint something that expresses worship to God.

❖ Read out Psalm 121 out loud as a group. Then split the group into four smaller groups, and give each group two verses of that Psalm. Each write a prayer about their section.

❖ Be creative with clay, paints or crayons. e.g. Give each person a small piece of modelling clay. Ask them to pray silently and to meditate as the leader reads a passage of Scripture. Encourage them to play with the clay in silence and see what is formed as the meditation progresses.

2. WORD: *To focus on the Word of God*

❖ God has revealed himself most fully through his Son Jesus Christ – the word made flesh

❖ He has also revealed himself in the way he has dealt with his people throughout history.

❖ **Our primary source to know God and to 'hear' God is through the Bible**, so it is important that we study the Bible ...

❖ Not just for the sake of knowledge but to inspire us, speak to us, feed us, challenge us and change us.

❖ It is God's living word inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore is relevant to us today. Eugene Peterson (author of the Message) in *Eat this book* says of reading scripture

"We are not interested in knowing more but becoming more. Scripture is the revelation of a world that is vast ... We must not squeeze scripture into our experiences but rather fit into the world revealed by scripture – swimming in this vast ocean ... Humble obedience is primary: the most important question is not 'what does it mean?' but 'what can I obey.'"

❖ Scripture reveals the mind and character of God to us

Practical Ideas for engaging with the Bible in house groups:

❖ Bible study – including how we are going to apply it to our lives

❖ Sharing of significant bible verses

❖ Listening to and reflecting on a sermon – on tape or heard at church; Spring Harvest, New Wine, PodCast etc.

❖ Reading a passage really slowly – allowing each verse to sink in

❖ Reading a passage several times allowing it to feed us

❖ Breaking into 2's or 3's to look at a passage and then compare what have discovered with the rest of the group

❖ Looking at a passage that we find difficult

❖ Swedish Bible Study method – use these questions to help you study any passage in the Bible:

1. First thought that comes to me

2. Where are we in the bible storyline? (Where have we come from and where are we heading?)

3. Something I can do/ a challenge

4. Something I have learnt about God and my relationship with him

5. Something I don't understand

Questions:

❖ Look at some of the passages above and discuss how they apply to you today – use the Swedish Bible Study method

❖ How can we really worship with the whole of our lives? What are the struggles in doing this? How can we make more space for prayer?

❖ Try out some of the practical ideas above and talk about them afterwards

❖ Ask each member to say how they read the Bible e.g. using notes/ book at a time?

Danny Wignall, January 2008