

## **“THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE”**

### ***“On Purpose In Worship”***

#### **Scripture Reading – Psalms, 96:1-13**

*Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.*

*Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns”.*

*The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.*

***‘The LORD is pleased only with those who worship him and trust his love.’***






***Psalms, 147:11, CEV***

THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE is based on the example of the Early Christian Church.

***‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.’***

***Acts, 2:42-47, NIV***

In Acts, 2:40-47, we read of five purposes God desires for his Church:

	<b><u>EVANGELISM</u></b>	(Acts, 2:40-41)
	<b><u>DISCIPLESHIP</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42)
	<b><u>FELLOWSHIP</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42, 44, 46)
	<b><u>MINISTRY</u></b>	(Acts, 2:45)
	<b><u>WORSHIP</u></b>	(Acts, 2:42, 46-47)

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In this series, we consider this amazing summary of the Early Christian Church.

When they actively engaged in EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP, MINISTRY, and WORSHIP, what was the result? **‘THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER DAILY THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED’.**

*If we do as they did, can our same Lord add to our number ‘THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED’?*

#### **“ON PURPOSE IN WORSHIP”**

*The Church exists to reach people for Jesus and to teach those who respond how to become like Jesus and to live like Jesus. The Church exists to care for people's needs in the name of Jesus through the acts of its members in faithful ministry and service. Whilst this is happening, the Church must worship God in the splendour of his holiness, in spirit and in truth...*

***‘Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.’***

***Acts, 2:46-47a, NIV***

**Would you agree or disagree with this statement of purpose?**

*The Malton Corps aims to be an active worshipping community, Bible based, prayer orientated, and Spirit led. God has his rightful place in our meetings, fellowships, and in our daily lives.*

**Worship is far more than what we do on a Sunday Morning.**

Worship is more than music and singing, praying, reading and listening to God's Word and giving in the offering. Worship is more than a style – some prefer a contemporary style whilst others are more comfortable with the traditional. Christians often disagree in their preferences for worship. BUT NOTE THIS: THERE IS NO BIBLICALLY MANDATED STYLE FOR WORSHIP. Whilst some may prefer contemporary melodies to old hymns; or the Authorised King James Version to The Message; or a relaxed style as opposed to ritualistic church liturgy... God loves all styles of worship. If it is offered in spirit and in truth, it is an acceptable act of worship to God.

**The Greek Word for worship is ‘PROSKUNEO’, meaning ‘COME TOWARDS TO KISS’.**

*“Worship is gazing upon God and adoring him just for himself.”*

*“Worship is to express in some appropriate manner what you feel in your heart.”*

*“Worship is an encounter with the holy and living God.”*

*“Worship is all that I am responding to all that God is.”*

**As we look at worship, I want us to concentrate on three important truths...**

## **1. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP**

***‘Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.’***

***Acts, 2:46-47a, NIV***



## WORSHIP IN THE TEMPLE

The Early Church continued to meet together every day in the temple courts.

The Temple had two primary functions: sacrificing to God, and the worship of God. The Temple continued with worship as it had always been done before and the First Christians continued with their practice of worshipping every day within those same temple courts.

**I have always found this example to be amazing.**

The First Christians knew that Jesus Christ had made amazing claims that had impacted upon the ritualistic religion of the day, and that its leaders had conspired to murder Jesus, the Messiah... yet the Church still met in the temple to praise God.

**Today, when people are upset about the church, what happens?**

*People stop attending worship altogether, yet they maintain that their faith is still strong and their love for Jesus remains constant... People stop contributing their tithes and offerings, and despite the Bible telling us that when we rob God we are put under a curse from Heaven, they maintain that God is blessing them and remains close to them... People exclude themselves from worshipping God, and despite being not involved in the work and witness or the mission and ministry of the church, they claim that they remain committed and loyal church members.*

***'I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.'***

***Psalms, 34:1-3, NKJV***

David speaks of personal worship and invites others to join with him in worship.

BLESSING GOD ... PRAISING GOD ... BOASTING ABOUT GOD ...

HUMBLING OURSELVES BEFORE GOD ... EXALTING GOD ... MAGNIFYING GOD ...



## WORSHIP IN THE HOME

Worship doesn't just happen in the Church... your home is a venue for worship.

If you are asked "WHEN DO YOU WORSHIP?" how would you respond? Probably, our first instinct would be to give the time and place for worship: *"I worship at The Salvation Army on Wood Street at 11.00 am"*. However, we should also worship God in our homes.

***'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates.***

***Deuteronomy, 6:4-9, NIV***



## WORSHIP ALL THE TIME, EVERYWHERE

**Worship is not part of your life; it is your whole life.**

Every activity can be an act of worship. When you perform even the smallest task for the praise, glory, and pleasure of God it is worship.

**'A dairymaid can milk cows to the glory of God', wrote Martin Luther.**

How is it possible? By doing everything as if you were doing it for Jesus and by carrying on a continual spiritual conversation with him while you do it. Work becomes worship when you dedicate it to God and perform it with an awareness of his presence.

***'Take your everyday ordinary life – your sleeping, your eating, your going to work, your walking around life and place it before God as an offering.'***

***Romans, 12:1, Msg***

***'Go to the LORD for help; and worship him continually.'***

***Psalms, 105:4, GNB***

Some other translations help us to understand what this worship involves:

CEV ***'Celebrate and worship his holy name [forever].'***

NIV ***'Seek his face always.'***

*'NATURALISTS are most inspired to love God out of doors, in natural settings. SENSATES love God with their senses and appreciate beautiful worship services that involve their sight, taste, smell, and touch, not just their ears. TRADITIONALISTS draw closer to God through rituals, liturgies, symbols, and unchanging structures. ASCETICS prefer to love God in solitude and simplicity. ACTIVISTS love God through confronting evil, battling injustice, and working to make the world a better place. CARE-GIVERS love God by loving others and meeting their needs. ENTHUSIASTS love God through celebration. CONTEMPLATIVES love God through adoration. INTELLECTUALS love God by studying with their minds.'*

***"SACRED PATHWAYS", Gary Thomas***

## **2. THE PERSON OF WORSHIP**

***'Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.'***

***Acts, 2:46-47a, NIV***

Worship is far more than for your benefit – it is for God's pleasure.

*I am concerned when someone comments: "I loved the worship today; I got a lot out of it". Well, I am glad you did, but it was not good if God did not love the worship and was pleased by it.*

*I am also concerned when someone says: "I did not get anything out of that today; I do not know why I came". I will tell you why you should come – it will bring pleasure to God if you worship him in spirit and in truth.*

**Our true motive in worship should be to bring glory and pleasure to our Creator.**

If we want to bring pleasure to God, we need to consider three important words: PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION, and PRACTICE. Any study of WORSHIP would bring up these three words...

*On the prescribed days of worship (the Feasts and Sacrifices) as the pilgrims made their way up to Jerusalem, they prepared their hearts to participate in the practice of worship...*

### **PURPOSEFUL PREPARATION**

*Can worship just happen; should it be planned or spontaneous?  
What preparations did you make for yourself to worship this morning?*

Some people go through the habit of wake up and show up. Some turn up for worship out of a sense of habit or tradition. Some turn up to be seen in the right company (not here?).

**Preparing for worship sets into motion the work of the Spirit in our hearts.**

***‘Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.’***

***Psalms, 100:4, NIV***

**Going to God’s house can be a chore or a delight.**

For the psalmist, it was a delight. As a pilgrim attending one of the three great religious festivals, he rejoiced to worship with God’s people in God’s house. We may find worship a chore if we have unconfessed sin or if our love for God has cooled. But if we are close to God and enjoy his presence, we will be eager to worship and praise him. Our attitude towards God will determine our view of worship.

**The psalmist’s words suggest that we must be prepared for worship.**

Our focus for worship should not be the world, others, or ourselves. Our focus should be entirely upon God. Emotionally, physically and spiritually we should prepare to worship.

*‘To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote to the purpose of God.’*

***William Temple***

**How can you prepare your heart for worship?**

*Pray before you come, so that you will be ready to pray when you arrive.  
Read the Word before, so that your heart will be soft when you worship.  
Sing songs before, so your voice will be ready to praise God in worship.  
Come hungry... arrive willing... expecting God to speak.*

### **PURPOSEFUL PARTICIPATION**

**Effective and true worship is never a spectator event.**

Someone has commented that a game of football is watched by 50,000 people who are sitting in the stands and are in desperate need of exercise. The 22 players are frantically running around the pitch and are in desperate need of a rest. Each may argue that they

are the most important to the football club, and all are involved, but who is actually playing the game?

**Worship, because of its nature, requires participation by all present.**

*‘Worship is communion with God in which believers by grace centre their minds attention and their hearts affection on the Lord himself. Humbly glorifying God in response to his greatness and his worth.’*

***Bruce Leafblad***

***‘Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.’***

***Psalms, 100:1-4, NIV***

*‘If worship does not change us, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change. Worship begins in holy expectancy; it ends in holy obedience.’*

***Richard J Foster***

**What was worship like in the Early Christian Church?**

***‘When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.’***

***I Corinthians, 14:26, NIV***

### **PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE**

**We need to purposefully practice humility.**

***‘Jesus said, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted”.’***

***Luke, 14:11, NIV***

*‘When we get on our knees and put our faces to the ground it elevates the heart higher than the head. We must humble our minds so that we do not come into this building with made up minds but rather with hearts that are humbled before the Lord to worship God in his greatness and worth.’*

***Joseph Garlington***

*At thy feet I bow adoring, bending lower, lower still;  
Giving up my all to follow, just to do my Master’s will;  
Giving up my all to follow, just to do my Master’s will.*

***Suzie Barker, SACS 35***

## **3. THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP**

***‘Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.’***

**Acts, 2:46-47a, NIV**

**‘You were planned for God’s pleasure through worship’.**

*‘When you fully understand this truth, you will never again have a problem with feeling insignificant. It proves your worth. If you are that important to God, and he considers you valuable enough to keep with him in eternity, what greater significance could you have? You are a child of God, and you bring pleasure to God like nothing else he has ever created.’*

**Rick Warren**

***‘Long before he laid down earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.’***

**Ephesians, 1:4-6, Msg**

#### **ACCURATE WORSHIP PLEASES GOD**

**How do you picture God? “I like to picture God as...”**

How does the Bible picture God? I would like to think that is how you see God!

*Worship must be based on the truth of Scripture not on our opinions about God.*

To worship in truth means to worship God as he is truly revealed in the Bible.

#### **AUTHENTIC WORSHIP PLEASES GOD**

When Jesus speaks about worshipping in the spirit he is not referring to The Holy Spirit but our own spirit. Worship must be genuine and heartfelt. It is not just a matter of saying the right words; you must mean what you say. God hates hypocrisy. He does not want showmanship or pretence or phoniness in worship. He wants honest and real expressions of our love and devotion to him. God gave us deep emotions so that we could come to him with deep feeling – but these emotions must be genuine, not faked.

***“I don’t want your sacrifices – I want your love. I don’t want your offerings – I want you to know me.”***

**Hosea, 6:6, TLB**

#### **THOUGHTFUL WORSHIP PLEASES GOD**

**Four times in Scripture, Jesus commands us to ‘LOVE GOD WITH YOUR MIND’.**

God is not pleased with thoughtless singing, the perfunctory praying of clichés, or even careless exclamations of “PRAISE THE LORD”, because we cannot think of anything else to say at the moment. If worship is mindless, it is meaningless. You must engage your mind.

**Jesus called thoughtless worship ‘VAIN REPETITIONS’.**

Try praising God without using the words praise, hallelujah, thanks, or amen. Instead of just saying, “We just want to praise you”, make a list of synonyms and use fresh words like admire, respect, value, revere, honour, and appreciate.

***‘Jesus said, “Find a quiet secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God and you’ll begin to sense his grace”.’***

**Matthew, 6:6, Msg**

#### **PRACTICAL WORSHIP PLEASES GOD**

**God is pleased when our worship is practical**

In worship we are to offer our bodies as a LIVING SACRIFICE’. Usually a sacrifice is to be considered as something dead, but God wants us to live for him. However, one problem with a living sacrifice is that it can crawl off the altar. We can sing ‘all that I am’ on Sunday, and go ‘absent without leave’ by Monday. Real worship requires a costly commitment.

**King David wanted to make a purchase to enable him to sacrifice to God.**

Araunah offered to give what David required as a gift but the king refused saying: “NO, I INSIST ON PAYING YOU FOR IT. I WILL NOT SACRIFICE TO THE LORD MY GOD BURNT OFFERINGS THAT COST ME NOTHING”. SO DAVID BOUGHT THE THRESHING-FLOOR AND THE OXEN AND PAID FIFTY SHEKELS OF SILVER FOR THEM’ (see II Samuel 24:24).

***‘Jesus said, “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, NIV**

**Jesus helps me to realise that God wants me to love him:**

**Passionately** *‘With all my heart and with all my soul.’*

**Thoughtfully** *‘With all my mind.’*

**Practically** *‘With all my strength.’*

*God does not have your affection until you love him with all your heart and soul.*

*God does not have your attention until you focus your mind solely upon him.*

*God does not have your ability until you give to him your body and strength*

*When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come*

*Longing just to bring something that’s of worth that will bless your heart.*

*I’ll bring you more than a song for a song in itself is not what you have required.*

*You search much deeper within through the way things appear;*

*You’re looking into my heart.*

*I’m coming back to the heart of worship and it’s all about you all about you Jesus.*

*I’m sorry Lord for the thing I’ve made it when it’s all about you, all about you Jesus.*

**Matt Redman, Magnify 70**

*To this purpose, let us live so we might be able to say, “Worship? We did that On Purpose!”*