

# Worship

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**Our Soul's Revival.** In our culture, we have talked ourselves into the idea that weekly worship is optional. Unfortunately, the Bible tells us something very different. Worship is essential. To be truly, fully human is to worship – regularly. Worship is God's gift to renew our souls, to meet our need for life at its deepest. *Q: Do you expect to meet God in worship? What effect can meeting God in worship have on your life?*

**The Gift of Sabbath.** In creating Sabbath, God set aside a time for rest and for worship, a time for humankind to recognize its relationship to the Creator and all created things. The sacred meeting time called worship happens when God's Sabbath gift to us meets our reverence, and praise is our response to this giver and gift. *Q: What worship experience sticks out in your mind as the most meaningful?*

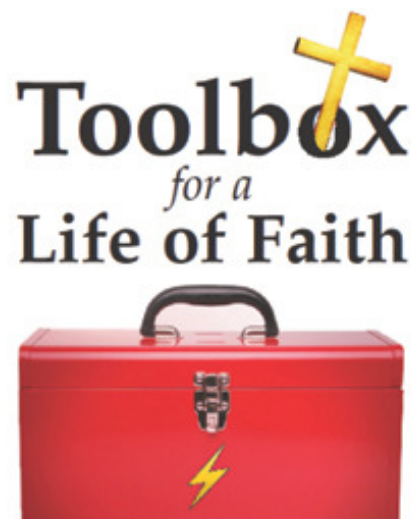
**Honoring God in Worship.** Christian faith is deeply personal, but never private. We honor God when we worship with others in church. Worship is our invitation to come into a time and place where heaven and earth touch.

*Something to try:*

- 1. Enter the worship space, take your seat, and, when all the greetings of those around you have ended, take a moment of silence and pray, "Lord, I come to honor you in worship today. I ask that all the things of this week that can crowd you out of my heart be set aside by the power of your Holy Spirit. Open my heart and mind to meet you and receive you today."*
- 2. Think of those whose lives have provided a faithful witness to you. Then simply pray, "Gracious Father, I do not come to honor you alone. Thank you for those with whom I worship you today – both here and in eternity. Especially I remember before you \_\_\_\_\_."*
- 3. Take time to thank God for all that you have received. Thank God for the relationships you have been blessed with; the guidance you may have received at just the right time; the opportunities you may have found; and the support, healing and love you know when you needed it the most. Take a moment to reflect on how God can take away our sin and provide a new beginning. Thank God that the promised forgiveness of Jesus is yours. Q: How might worship as honoring God change or enhance your approach to worship?*

**Worship As Weekly Compass.** To be human is to lose our way in the noise and busy-ness of our lives. And the daily-ness of life can pull us away from what we really believe, drag us away from how we long to behave, or seduce us into following after all the lesser goods that clamor for our allegiance. Weekly worship is a heaven-sent compass to reorient our lives and point us to spiritual "true north." Practice worship as a spiritual compass:

- 1. Take a moment, as I enter worship, to reflect on the occasions of anger and hurt from the past week.*
- 2. I pray that the Holy Spirit will show me what I did that I need to own and learn from. I also ask for the spiritual wisdom to discern what is "their stuff"; that is, what I cannot and should not take on to myself because it belongs to someone else, or the circumstances of that time.*



3. *Pray for the persons involved. I lift them up to God asking God to heal and bless them, even as I ask God to heal and bless me by taking the anger and hurt and preventing them from becoming grudges.*
  4. *Ask God to tell me what would be a healthy response to those events.*
  5. *Develop a strategy for making amends when that seems necessary. This is a form of confession in its best sense.*
- Q: How is, or could, weekly worship be a compass for your life?*

**Sent into the World.** I want to challenge you to worship weekly for just three months. Go with high expectations. Go seeking God. Let your soul watch for the coming of the Savior. Open your heart and mind to the gift of worship and see what happens.

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Based on "Real Faith for Real Life" by Michael Foss, Augsburg Fortress, 2004.