

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Worship Together

Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Gather hymnals or copy the words to "***Brethren, We Have Met to Worship***". The hymn is found on the final page of this session, following the "**Worship Time**"

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

This week might be a good opportunity to take the **Lord's Supper**. Be sure to prepare for this according to the way that your church chooses to share together in this Ordinance. You may choose to take the Lord's Supper at a time during the service, as a special service after the worship period, or as a part of a fellowship meal after the service concludes. Check the **How To:** manual found on the website for suggestions regarding the Lord's Supper (Communion).

Music Sources:

"Brethren, We Have Met to Worship" *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #379
"Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children" *The Baptist Hymnal*, #31
"O Lord, our Lord, How Majestic" *Marantha! Music Praise*, Expanded 3rd Edition, #217
"Worthy of Worship" *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #3
"Holy in the Sanctuary"
"Heart of Worship"
"Shout to the Lord" *Hosanna! Music Songbook II*, #947

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Worship Together******Focal Text***

Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20

Main Idea

A New Testament Church Worships the Lord Together.

Questions to Explore

How does our church's experience of worship compare to that of the early church?

Gathering together:

Help the group to settle into an attitude of worship and Bible study by asking everyone to sing together the hymn "Brethren, We Have Met to Worship" (#379, *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991). Use only verses 1 and 4.

**Brethren, we have met to worship
And adore the Lord our God;
Will you pray with all your power,
While we try to preach the Word?
All is vain unless the Spirit
Of the Holy One comes down;
Brethren, pray and holy manna
Will be showered all around.**

**Let us love our God supremely,
Let us love each other, too;
Let us love and pray for sinners,
Till our God makes all things new.
Then He'll call us home to heaven,
At His table we'll sit down;
Christ will gird Himself, and serve us
With sweet manna all around.**

Words: George Atkins Music: William Moore

First thoughts:

Suggest that this hymn is actually a call to worship, and it gives several items which worship will contain. Ask the group to keep this hymnal open before them and to find the answers to the following questions:

- ✓ Who is implored to worship? (Brethren, which is inclusive of both sexes, children, and adults).
- ✓ What is the group said to be doing as they worship? (Adoring the Lord our God).
- ✓ What are they asked to do? (Pray with all your power).
- ✓ What will someone probably do during the worship time? (try to preach the Word).
- ✓ What is essential to worship, or all will be in vain? (The Spirit of the Holy One comes down).

Such questions can be asked of verse 4, time permitting.

The Gathering Time leader may say something like the following:

Let us ask some questions about worship. We may take it for granted that we fail to know when genuine worship takes place. Do you know when you have really worshipped? How did you feel? Do you feel that an act of worship is a private experience, or were you aware that you were sharing the experience with others? What did you do to produce a feeling of worship? Is worship something we can produce by doing certain things, like singing, praying, preaching? Can you experience a sense of having worshipped without being together with other worshippers? Are there places that are more conducive to worship than others? It has been said that you can worship God on a golf course while getting out of the rough on the eighteenth hole, but it is not likely you will. Worship, like golf, takes concentration; you must be "in" it.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Pray the following: Our Father in Heaven, teach us to worship, even as you taught your apostles to pray. Teach us to sing, even as you taught the disciples to call God "father." Teach us to recognize our need for thee, because we need thee every hour. God of the universe, Saviour of the smallest; how do we know your mercy when our pride is so much with us? O, that we could know the magnitude of your grace in this moment. Amen.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Worship Together

Focal Text

Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20

Background Text

Acts 2:42-47; 4:23-31; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 14:26-33; Ephesians 5:19-20

Main Idea

A New Testament Church Worships the Lord Together.

Questions to Explore

How does our church’s experience of worship compare to that of the early church?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to identify how their church’s worship can be improved.

Introduction to your personal study:

The Grand Canyon

A beautiful symphony

The majestic Canadian Rockies

The miracle of birth

What feelings does each of these images inspire in you? God created us with the capacity to appreciate beauty – to experience awe and wonder at His greatness. He also created us with the ability to respond to Him in gratitude and praise for His gifts. When we join with other believers in praise, we magnify our thanks to God. We can say with the psalmist, “***O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!***” (Psalm 8:1).

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Worshipping Together (Acts 2:42-47)

The new community of believers which was created on the Day of Pentecost expressed their love and praise to God in various ways. They continually devoted themselves to the breaking of bread, what we would call “the Lord’s Supper” and to prayer (Acts 2:42). They met daily in the temple and broke bread from house to house (2:46). Their joint or “corporate” worship was characterized by praise. Worship may have varied from situation to situation and fellowship to fellowship. Apparently there was no set order for corporate worship. We do know that their services of praise and adoration included the breaking of bread, prayer, the sense of awe, and praise for God.

Worship must come from the heart of the believer. In contrast to the formal order of Jewish worship and sacrifice, Jesus commanded only that we must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Jesus emphasized the attitude of the heart in worship. He warned against prayer merely for show and excessive repetition (See Matthew 6:5-13). Whether doing acts of righteousness, praying or fasting, Jesus cautions against drawing outward attention. Our acts of worship are to be done for God, not to impress others. They are the overflow of a heart full of thanksgiving and awe.

Worshipping in Troas (Acts 20:7-12)

Preaching the good news of Christ and teaching from Scripture were significant aspects of worship from the time of Jesus’ ministry (See Mark 1:21-28). God used Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost to reach more than 3,000 new believers. On Paul’s third missionary journey he met with some believers in Troas on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). It is unclear from this passage whether the first day had become a special day to meet, or the believers were meeting this day because Paul was intending to depart the next day. In any event, they met with the intention of “breaking bread.” Clearly this act of observance was more than just eating a meal together, although it may have been conducted during an ordinary meal.

The observance of the breaking of bread was apparently a key part of the early worship by believers wherever they gathered (See Acts 2:42). Just what this observance meant would be debated by Christians for centuries as the theology of the breaking of bread developed. However, from these earliest observances on, the emphasis was on the Lord’s sacrifice for our sins (See Matthew 26:26-28).

In addition to the breaking of bread, Paul spoke at length to the gathering at Troas. In fact he talked so long, one sleepy young man fell from the window (Acts 20:7-9). Paul revived the youngster, broke the bread, ate, and kept talking until daybreak (20:10)!

In some places more than one person did the preaching (1 Corinthians 14:26-33). The church at Corinth apparently practiced an unstructured type of worship. Paul offers some order to their worship. He emphasized that all things should be done to build up the entire church (1 Corinthians 14: 26-33). God is not a God of confusion but of peace, therefore preaching and teaching should be done in such a way that the listeners can readily understand (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Worshipping in Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

Paul wrote this letter of instruction to the church in Corinth, which he had planted on his second missionary journey. (See Acts 18:1-17). The believers asked that Paul clarify several areas of the practice of faith. In his response to these believers at Corinth, Paul details the practice of remembering Jesus' sacrifice for us through the "breaking of the bread." It is in this letter that Paul refers to the breaking of bread as the "Lord's Supper." This is the only place in Scripture where the term is used, although Revelation refers to a marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

Setting of Passover

Jesus celebrated His Last Supper with the disciples in the context of His Passover observance (Matthew 26:19). The observance of Passover is a symbol of the deliverance of God's chosen people from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12). Our understanding of Jesus' sacrifice for us is greatly enhanced when we grasp the significance of the Passover meal Jesus observed with His disciples. The Passover is foundational in God's eternal redemption plan (See Exodus 6:6-8). At God's command the blood of an unblemished lamb was spread above and on the sides of the doorway of each Israelite home. When the death angel came to take the firstborn of all Egypt, he passed over those homes that were covered by the blood. This last in a series of ten plagues finally convinced Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go from the land of Egypt. Deliverance was only possible through the sacrifice of the lamb and the blood on the doorways. God commanded the observance of the Passover as a holy convocation (Leviticus 23:5). Many years later, on the very anniversary of the first Passover, Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God was slain for our salvation (See 1 Peter 1:18-21).

In keeping with God's command, Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover feast. Jesus earnestly desired to eat this last Passover with His disciples before He suffered. He said, ***"For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God"*** (Luke 22:19). We are called to both remember Jesus' sacrifice for our spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin and to look forward to the future day of fulfilment in the Kingdom of God.

A Picture of Selfishness and One of Self-sacrifice

From Paul's letter to the Corinthian church letter we receive a negative example of breaking of bread, as well the most complete discussion of what Christ intended this observance to be (See 1 Corinthians 11:23-34). The celebrations taking place in Corinth caused Paul much concern. Paul notes that this body of believers may think they are coming together for worship when they break bread, but it is **not** the Lord's Supper they are observing (1 Corinthians 11:17-22). Paul condemns their selfishness and factions. If the main point is merely to eat and drink, Paul says, "Eat at home!" (1 Corinthians 11:34). Clearly the Lord Jesus intended the remembrance of His supreme sacrifice to be much more than a greedy free-for-all.

Instead, Paul instructs the church at Corinth as he was instructed from Christ regarding the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23). The Gospel accounts of Jesus' Last Passover Supper with His disciples on the night He was betrayed are found in Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, and Luke 22:15-20. The key elements are that Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, ***"This is My Body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me"*** (1 Corinthians 11:24). Paul quotes Jesus' words as recorded by Luke (Luke 22:19).

After supper Jesus took a cup of wine, gave thanks saying, ***"This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me"*** (1 Corinthians 11:25). This new covenant, to be written in our hearts, was prophesied by Jeremiah (See Jeremiah 31:31-33). The observation of the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of His sacrifice for our deliverance from spiritual bondage (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Attitude of Worship

We cannot approach this remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice for us casually. Paul concludes that to participate in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is the same as sinning against the Lord Himself (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Only by God's sanctifying grace are we made worthy to share in the remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice. We are urged to examine ourselves (11:28; See Psalm 139:23-24; 1 John 1:9). If we realize there is a broken relationship with a brother or sister, we need to first go and be reconciled to the other person then return to worship (Matthew 5:23-24).

This holy remembrance involves intimate fellowship with the Sacrificial Lamb, our risen Lord, and with our fellow believers. We must seek to approach the observance with reverence for Him and for the body (1 Corinthians 11:33-34).

Worshipping in Ephesus (Ephesians 5:19-20)

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul encourages the believers to use a variety of forms of worship (Ephesians 5:19-20). The ancient songbook of Israel, the Psalms, included songs to express a broad spectrum of emotion to God. Some songs are addressed to God; some are about Him. Worshipers are encouraged to sing hymns of

praise and spiritual songs as well to the Lord. Believers are urged to express their gratitude to God in everything, making music in their hearts to the Lord. What a picture of responsive worship to the Saviour!

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible study:

Those who have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus cannot help but express their praise and thanksgiving to Him. We attribute supreme value and significance to Christ's sacrifice for us when we observe the Lord's Supper remembrance. Such worship overflows from our hearts of gratitude as we attempt to express our love for Him. It is the attitude of worship, and not so much the form of worship, with which the Lord is concerned. Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving in our hearts and give Him praise!

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**

2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Worship Together

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to, perhaps ***“Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children***—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children’s Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20

Background Text

Acts 2:42-47; 4:23-31; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 14:26-33; Ephesians 5:19-20

Main Idea

A New Testament Church Worships the Lord Together.

Questions to Explore

How does our church’s experience of worship compare to that of the early church?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to identify how their church’s worship can be improved.

Connect with Life:

Say: God has created some of the most magnificent places throughout our world. Think of the most awe-inspiring place you have seen.

Ask for volunteers to describe how they felt when they experienced that place.

Say: The wonder we experience when we see a beautiful sunset or hold a newborn baby is just one facet of the awe we can experience when we are in God's presence. Our worship comes from hearts of gratitude and praise. Today we will explore how our church's experience of worship compares to that of the early church.

Guide the Study:

Invite the class to open their Bibles to Acts chapter 2. Ask someone to read Acts 2:42-47.

Say: The early believers expressed their praise and thanksgiving to God in various ways.

Ask: What are some of the methods of worship listed in this passage? Record these responses.

Say: The Bible does not specify a set form of correct worship. Jesus is most concerned with the attitude of our hearts.

Ask: What do you think Jesus meant when He said that we must "worship Him in spirit and truth?"

Discuss the contrast in Matthew 6:5-13 between those who fasted, prayed, or did works of righteousness for show, and those who truly worship out of a heart of thankfulness.

Have someone read Acts 20:7-12. Share the background information from the **"Teacher Preparation"** on the place of preaching and teaching in worship. Relate that the believers in Troas were meeting on the first day of the week to "break bread."

Say: It is unclear from this passage whether the first day had already become a special day to meet or whether the believers were meeting this day to break bread with Paul since he was leaving the next day.

Say: We know from Scripture that Paul was a prolific writer. Here is an example of his preaching ability. Clearly God had gifted him with the amazing ability to communicate through both the written and spoken word. Ask members for examples of others whose preaching or teaching God has used to touch their lives.

Discuss the importance of order in worship.

Say: God hasn't given us rigid structures of worship. However, He does desire that our worship be orderly and done to build up the entire church.

Ask: What can we do to encourage worship that allows for spontaneity but is done in an orderly manner?

Say: One significant aspect of worship is “breaking of the bread” or the Lord’s Supper. The lengthiest discussion on the observance of the Lord’s Supper is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Share the background information from the “Teacher Preparation” on the book of First Corinthians.

Say: Jesus gave us this ordinance when He shared the Last Passover Supper with His disciples. Share the background information on Passover from the “Teacher Preparation”.

If any members in the group have participated in a traditional Jewish Passover Seder, invite them to share their experience.

9. Ask a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 11:17-22.

Say: This passage describes the kind of selfishness we should seek to avoid in our observance of the Lord’s Supper. Ask volunteers to identify inappropriate behaviour from the passage.

Invite someone to read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Discuss the observation of the Lord’s Supper as a remembrance of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins.

Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 11:27-34.

Ask: What does it mean to eat the bread or drink the cup in an unworthy manner?

Say: In addition to preaching, teaching and observing the Lord’s Supper, singing is an important part of worship.

Ask someone to read Ephesians 5:19-20.

Discuss the various types of songs mentioned in this passage. Invite members to name their favourite Psalms and hymns.

Say: We can pray God’s Word through Scripture that is set to music. This is a great way for all ages to learn God’s Word.

Discuss the types of music used in your worship times.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Say: God has given us the ability to appreciate His creation. He has given us the intellect to understand something of His majesty and the emotions to express our praise to Him. He has also given us the picture of the Lord's Supper to remind us of His ultimate sacrifice for our redemption. As we come before Him in praise, let us examine ourselves and give Him the honour due Him. Let us praise His Name!

Pray, thanking God for Who He is, for making us worthy to approach Him and for His gift of grace.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Worship Together

Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Teen Worship

Teens today are said to appreciate and desire more traditional, participatory forms of worship – ritual, frequent taking of Communion (Lord's Supper), Scripture reading, and liturgical music (music used in the distant past as a part of worship; now sometimes used weekly and mixed with some hard-edged praise music). They also seem to want to include drama, banners, paintings, poems, etc. in their worship experience.

Community (a feeling of oneness with a small group of believers) also seems to be very important to many of today's teens.

Discuss:

- ❖ How much of the above describes teens you know?
- ❖ How about yourselves?
- ❖ Are the adults in your church aware of what you might want to experience in worship? How can you get them to try some of what you want? Could you help lead it?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Worship Together*****Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20****Beginning the Service:**

Call the congregation to worship by singing: “O Lord, our Lord, How Majestic, MMP, #217, “Worthy of Worship” BH, 1991, #3 “Holy in the Sanctuary”, “Heart of Worship”, and/or other praise hymns with the theme of worshipping God.

Offering:

Have older preschoolers and younger children take up the offering. Use baskets with high enough sides to make spilling more difficult.

Praying for the World:

Help the congregation think of a country where Christian worship is illegal and/or dangerous. Perhaps someone in the group knows a Christian national or missionary in that country. **Pray** for the country, that nation’s leader (name?), and any Christians you might know who live there. Pray that God will bring about the miracle of freedom of worship in the nation or area.

Sing together the praise chorus “Shout to the Lord” (#947, Hosanna! Music Songbook II).

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

In the Presence of God**Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Ephesians 5:19-20**©2001-2007, Eternal Interactive, LLC, All Rights Reserved. www.homechurchonline.com***Worship Together*** – 01-03-11-en

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Introduction

A dedicated Christian recently experienced a time of worship while attending a funeral. After the service, it occurred to him that he had experienced a genuine sense of awe in the presence of God and had been spiritually uplifted by the experience. He began to reflect on the experience the day before in the morning worship service of his church. Everything was planned to be worshipful: a call to worship, singing, reading scriptures, special music, prayers, sermon, invitation, benediction, followed by the announcements. However, at the funeral, even in the midst of human tragedy, he also experienced the presence of Him who works in all things for the good of those who love the Lord; everything is His workshop, even death.

“Together” is the key word in our thoughts today. Worship can be in private or with a group. “Together” characterizes the church, described in Acts 2:42ff. The amazing thing is what these people did that gives us reason to say they worshipped together. They “were together,” as the NIV translates, “they continued together in close fellowship,” as translated by the TEV, “they lived together and held all they had as common goods,” as C.B. Williams translates. It is amazing that their togetherness, their worship, seems to have generated a spirit that outsiders admired. People wanted to be part of their fellowship.

Too often, the Christian community (as well as non-Christians) connect worship with a building. In fact, many world governments have laws forbidding Christians from worshipping outside of their church building. This is like saying that water is only to be allowed in rivers – and never in lakes or oceans. Impossible! So it is with worship. Christians will worship everywhere. It simply spills over into all of life and every place. No laws can stop it. In fact, today, millions of Christians around the world are worshipping in homes, schools, warehouses, offices, parks, forests, desert caves, and other places. A building does not create or determine worship. Christians expressing humbleness before God determine worship.

I. The common denominator in all worship

All worship experiences have one thing in common: they all lead to an experience of the presence of God. Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, had a very unusual experience of the presence of God. He dreamed that he saw a stairway from earth to heaven, and angels were going up and down the stairway. God stood above the stairway. When he awoke from the dream, Jacob thought, “Surely the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it.” He said to himself, “This is an awesome place,” and he called it the gate of heaven.

He used the stone on which he had rested his head and made an altar, and called the place “Bethel,” which means, “House of God.” He felt he was on the front porch of God’s house. A stone for an altar, the open country for a house of God, and Jacob was

so caught up in the experience that he made a vow with God, then and there. This is what happens when people worship God.

The servant of Abraham worshipped God at least twice, and prayed twice, on his long trip to Abraham's hometown, where he hoped to find a bride for Isaac. He worshipped God and he prayed to God alone, and he bowed to the ground as an act of worship. His worship consisted in asking for God's leadership, and in thanking God for leading him to the right woman.

II. The impact of genuine worship

The church that was born on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem experienced a great increase in numbers on that first day, yet the people devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

After a prayer before eating a meal, a young theologian remarked: "Wow! I feel like I have been in church." He was expressing the same feeling that Abraham's servant, along with Jacob and others experienced when in the presence of God. "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not."

III. How to worship

How is the presence of God summoned, called into existence? Of course, we plan worship services for this purpose. It is done in different ways, different manners. It takes "different strokes for different folks," as the saying goes. For many older folk, the traditional form of worship enables them to feel like they have "been to church." For others it takes activities much like those found in other places in society: music that makes you want to clap your hands, raise your hands, sway back and forth, with plenty of "Amen," "Praise the Lord," and other words of approval scattered throughout the assembly. WOW worship is "in" for a large part of today's culture.

The scripture pictures the New Testament churches doing varied things when they were assembled: taking the Lord's Supper, sharing material possessions, praying, singing, giving testimonies, preaching: just about everything was done in a sense of the presence of God.

The togetherness of worship is emphasized in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. The writer uses the term "together" three times in four verses, and heaps scorn upon a practice that is just the opposite of togetherness. "Coming together" is the essence of church and worship. In the New Testament the necessity of coming together is emphasized. The Apostle Paul is critical of the church when togetherness does not take place. Paul told the church that in fact, they prevented worship from occurring. He is so critical that he even suggested that their gathering was doing more harm than good (1 Corinthians 11:17). This means that by the selfishness of some members, it was impossible to invoke a spirit of unity on the assembly.

One final glimpse into the worship life of the churches in the New Testament is seen in Ephesians 5:19-20. The author is speaking about worship in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, rather than fullness of alcoholic spirits. Singing and making melody in the heart are to be elements of the meetings of Christians, and this makes for worship. Almost as a postscript, the injunction is added to give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Call to Commitment:

Singing, praying, testifying, sharing, scripture reading, and study, are some of the elements of worship in the New Testament. When these are experienced we want to say “Amen” and leave the place of worship uplifted because God has been exalted and his people have worshipped.

Concluding the Service:

Read Psalm 24 as a conclusion to the service.

Ask a teen or adult to pray – thanking God for his presence among your congregation and for the opportunity to worship.

“Brethren, We Have Met to Worship”

**Brethren, we have met to worship
And adore the Lord our God;
Will you pray with all your power,
While we try to preach the Word?
All is vain unless the Spirit
Of the Holy One comes down;
Brethren, pray and holy manna
Will be showered all around.**

**Let us love our God supremely,
Let us love each other, too;
Let us love and pray for sinners,
Till our God makes all things new.
Then He'll call us home to heaven,
At His table we'll sit down;
Christ will gird Himself, and serve us
With sweet manna all around.**

Words: George Atkins Music: William Moore