

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*The Worshipping Congregation*  
Psalms 67; 108:1-6; 121

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 series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #...). 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:**

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Copy the page given at the end of the Worship Time and give to three different people to read at the beginning of the Bible Study period. One will read the Main Idea; another will read the Questions to Explore and a third will read the Teaching Aim.

**Worship Time Leader:**

**Music Sources:**

**Thou Art Worthy**, *The Worship Hymnal* #23; CCLI #14789

**We Will Glorify**, *The Worship Hymnal* #22; CCLI #19038

**Great and Mighty**, *The Worship Hymnal* #20; CCLI #16495

**I Worship You, Almighty God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #16; CCLI #20807

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

***The Worshipping Congregation***  
**Psalm 67; Psalm 108:1-6; Psalm 121**

**Focal Text**

Psalm 67; Psalm 108:1-6; Psalm 121

**Background Text**

Psalm 75; Psalm 115

**Main Idea**

Worship involves prayer for God's grace, presence, and blessing and then moves to seek His blessing for all peoples of the earth. God invites all people to praise Him because He rules the world fairly in justice.

**Questions to Explore**

How do we avoid praise that focuses only on our own needs?

Is it in fact praise if we are concerned only with music which pleases us or teaching or preaching which we enjoy?

Will worship encourage us to think of others and how to share the gospel with them?

**Teaching Aim**

Learners will consider what elements are important in praising God.

Learners will think of the importance of gratitude in praising God.

Learners will consider how worship makes us want to share the gospel with others.

**Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Thou Art Worthy**, *The Worship Hymnal* #23; CCLI #14789

**We Will Glorify**, *The Worship Hymnal* #22; CCLI #19038

## First thoughts:

The Psalms serve well as individual devotional readings. Many of the psalms are encouraging and uplifting. Today we will reflect on worshipping together as a congregation and how doing so is an encouragement and a blessing personally as well as honoring to God.

One of the most awesome insights of the psalmists and one they seem always to have found quite incredible is that the God who made heaven and earth should have time or take the trouble to keep watch over and be mindful of man. But they were very sure of that fact and asserted it frequently. There is a certainty of hearing and a hope of intervention. "It is an insight, finally, which is an assertion of the real Presence of God who is near and who cares, and one eloquently stated in the words of Jesus ***"But even the hairs of your head are all numbered"*** (Matt. 10:30)" (**The Broadman Bible Commentary: Esther –Psalms**. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971, p. 422).

Today we as a worshipping congregation will rejoice in the Presence of God who is near and who cares. We will consider what elements are important in praising God and think of the importance of gratitude in praising God. We will consider how worship makes us want to share the gospel with others.

## Closing the Gathering Time:

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.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**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

### *The Worshipping Congregation* Psalm 67; Psalm 108:1-6; Psalm 121

#### **Focal Text**

Psalm 67; Psalm 108:1-6; Psalm 121

#### **Background Text**

Psalm 75; Psalm 115

#### **Main Idea**

Worship involves prayer for God’s grace, presence, and blessing and then moves to seek His blessing for all peoples of the earth. God invites all people to praise Him because He rules the world fairly in justice.

#### **Questions to Explore**

How do we avoid praise that focuses only on our own needs?

Is it in fact praise if we are concerned only with music which pleases us or teaching or preaching which we enjoy?

Will worship encourage us to think of others and how to share the gospel with them?

#### **Teaching Aim**

Learners will consider what elements are important in praising God.

Learners will think of the importance of gratitude in praising God.

Learners will consider how worship makes us want to share the gospel with others.

#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Read the three scripture passages devotionally this week. (That is, involve those passages in the quiet times you spend listening to God and talking to Him). Think of the individual members of your group and pray that you will be able to help them grow

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*The Worshipping Congregation* – 25-52-12

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closer to the Lord and to one another as you share the study of the scripture with them. Study the Main Idea ,the Questions to Explore, and the Teaching Aim with your group in mind.

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

**Psalm 67: 1-7**

***May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, Selah  
That your ways may be known on earth,  
Your salvation among all nations.***

***May the peoples praise you, O God;  
May all the peoples praise you.  
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
For you rule the peoples justly  
And guide the nations of the earth. Selah***

***May the peoples praise you, O God;  
May all the peoples praise you.***

***Then the land will yield its harvest,  
And God, our God, will bless us.  
God will bless us,  
And all the ends of the earth will fear him.***

In Numbers 6:22-27 we read: ***The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:***

***The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace’.***

***So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”***

This passage reflects the early days in the life of the Israelite nation under Moses’ leadership. Many admonitions for living together in a healthful and peaceful way have been given. In this passage, Moses is to tell Aaron and his sons who will be the priestly

line from this time into the future how to bless the people. The words are simple, but profound. “The ‘Aaronic blessing’ in Numbers is effective because it originated at God’s initiative. This invocation does not invoke an outward blessing of material goods or circumstances, but inward blessing. The blessing was God Himself. The prayer of blessing in formal worship assures the people of God’s involvement in daily life, work, and family” (**Disciple’s Study Bible**. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, p. 170).

The words which appear in Numbers and again in Psalm 47:1 are often used as a benediction to close a worship service and to encourage the congregation as they disperse to the activities of their daily lives.

The purpose of the blessing is not only for the people themselves, but in order that the ways of the Lord may be known on earth and that His salvation be known among the nations. This is an amazing missionary perspective for a people who considered themselves to be God’s chosen people. Years before the birth of Christ, there was an understanding that the worship of the one God, the Lord of the Universe, was available to all peoples.

The meaning of the word “Selah” is not clear. Some commentators feel it was a musical direction since many of the psalms were sung. If this is true, then each time “Selah” appears in a psalm, the musicians paused, either to take a breath, or to sing a cappella or let the instruments play alone. Perhaps they were pausing to praise Him about whom the song was speaking, perhaps even lifting their hands in worship. The word “Selah” is found 71 times in the Psalms. It appears three times in Habakkuk chapter three. The Amplified Bible adds “pause and calmly think about that” to each verse where “Selah” appears. (See [www.gotQuestions.org](http://www.gotQuestions.org) “What does ‘Selah’ mean in the Bible?”)

“This may well be the most missionary of all of the psalms. Beginning with a prayer for God’s grace, presence, and blessing, it moves to seek His blessing for all the peoples of the earth. God has the right to invite and expect all peoples to praise Him because He rules the world fairly in justice. One way God extends His salvation to all the nations is through blessing the harvest. This act leads all peoples to reverence and worship Him. This Psalm and many others uses a Hebrew style of poetic writing called parallelism by stating a great longing that God’s ways be known to all peoples of the earth and then repeating it in a slightly different form, asking that God’s salvation be make known among all nations. Even in modern times there is no more eloquent call to world evangelism” (**Disciple’s Study Bible**, p. 686).

In verses 4-5, the nations are called upon to “be glad and sing for joy” because God rules them with equity and guides them.

***May the peoples praise you, O God;  
May all the peoples praise you.***



Praise always involves thanksgiving. In this Psalm we see thanksgiving for the fact that God's face shines upon His people. He rules with fairness. The land will yield its harvest. "Psalm 67 is a hymn of thanksgiving, the primary purpose of which is the expression of gratitude for the beneficent Presence of God. Its occasion appears to have been a gathering for worship during or just following the time of harvest, probably the Feast of Booths (Lev. 23:34; Deut. 16:13-17). But a great deal more is involved in this hymn than thankfulness for a good crop, for the psalmist uses the occasion to remind the congregation of the perpetual bounty of God's Presence, a bounty of which the harvest of the soil is but one manifestation" (**The Broadman Bible Commentary**, p. 303).

### **Psalm 108: 1-6**

***My heart is steadfast, O God;  
I will sing and make music with all my soul.  
Awake, harp and lyre!  
I will awaken the dawn.  
I will praise you, O lord, among the nations;  
I will sing of you among the peoples.  
For great is your love, higher than the heavens;  
Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.  
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,  
And let your glory be over all the earth.  
Save us and help us with your right hand,  
That those you love may be delivered.***

These verses are almost identical to Psalm 57: 7-11. Verses 7-13 are similar to Psalm 60: 5-12. The Psalms were used in worship and repetitive themes are often found. This simply indicates that these themes were those which the worshipping congregations used to express their understanding of God's mercy and goodness to them.

The Psalms "function both as expressions of our prayer to God and as God's inspired teaching to us. This psalm allows us to praise God, call for His help, gain confidence in His deliverance, and confess our faith. It also teaches us of God's sovereignty" (Disciple's Study Bible, p. 722).

These verses are intensely personal. The writer speaks of his steadfast heart. He is committed to God and very dependent on him. This steadfastness causes him to sing and make music with harp and lyre. This worship occurs early in the morning. But it is not just a solitary worship held early in the morning. The praise of the worshipper is made known among the nations; among the peoples.

Paul must have been thinking of a steadfast heart when he wrote in Ephesians 4:14 ***Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown***

***here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.***

God's love and faithfulness are extolled. "The love and faithfulness of God are virtually synonymous here. God's love is constant, dependable, unchanging" (**Disciple's Study Bible**, p. 708). Psalms 100: 5-6 states this truth ***For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*** "God is not fickle. His good, loving faithfulness remains the same forever. We can count on Him" (**Disciple's Study Bible**, p. 712).

Verse 5-6 indicate God's purpose to be present and recognized in all His glory by all people. "God is Lord over all nations and over all parts of all nations. Because He is Lord over all, He is the Saviour of all. Biblical passages like this teach us the inclusiveness of God's saving nature, the utter impossibility of human beings saving themselves and love as God's motive in saving his people" (**Disciple's Study Bible**, p. 722).

### **Psalm 121**

***I lift up my eyes to the hills –  
Where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
The Maker of heaven and earth.***

***He will not let your foot slip –  
He who watches over you will not slumber;  
Indeed, he who watches over Israel  
Will neither slumber nor sleep.***

***The Lord watches over you –  
The Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
The sun will not harm you by day,  
Nor the moon by night.***

***The Lord will keep you from all harm –  
He will watch over your life;  
The Lord will watch over your coming and going  
Both now and forevermore.***

"There are in the book of Psalms, for all the magnificent eloquence and profound poetic beauty there, few poems to equal this short psalm. In the simple rhythm of universal poetry, it raises and answers an ever relevant question: Where is man's help, his real help? The question is common, in one form, or another, whether vocalized or not, to all men. The answer given here could only have come from one who had learned it by experience, at first hand" (**The Broadman Bible Commentary**, p. 421).

The worshiper says that he looks to the hills. “The specific reference is to the hills of Zion, where Yahweh’s Presence was known specially to dwell. The question is not one of whether, but one of how soon. The supplicant is in need and is awaiting the advent of Yahweh with the impatience of need. His question means, ‘Which way, how soon, just how shall I look and hope?’” (**The Broadman Bible Commentary**, p. 422).

This prayer was probably used in worship in the Temple. It functions as a blessing to the worried worshipper. When we come together to worship together, we need to affirm our belief that God is watching over us. Within the congregation at any given time, there will be those whose life circumstances cause them to doubt this reality or at least to need reassurance that it is true. Others in the congregation may be able to firmly agree that God has been watching over their daily affairs. This beautiful Psalm makes it easy to put into words the belief we have of God’s sovereign care.

This grateful psalmist speaks of an ever-alert God who offers constant protection from all harm. God is able to care for us for He is the maker of heaven and earth. He will keep us from falling. It is true that we are able to make wrong choices and suffer the consequences of those choices. It is true that we may suffer from the evil that others bring into our lives. But the psalmist is speaking here to those who choose to ask daily for God’s protective care.

Jesus taught his disciples and us to pray in the prayer recorded in Matthew 6: 9-13. We sometimes repeat those words quickly and without thought, but each word is heavy with meaning. It asks for our daily bread to be provided and it mentions another daily need ***And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.***

Psalm 121 assures us that God is always personally watching over us. As we follow him we can believe that ***he will not let your foot slip.***

The reference to protection from the sun and moon refers to “the ancients’ fear of ‘sunstroke’ (which) was based on the observation of the obvious harmful effects of the sun’s rays; their fear of ‘moonstroke’ arose from their belief in a correlation between the activity of certain diseases (e.g., epilepsy and fevers) and the moon’s phases. The popular mind, of course, assumed that a demon in the sun or the moon was the agent of the evil” (**The Interpreter’s Bible: Psalms - Proverbs**. New York: Abingdon Press, 1955, pp. 646-647). The psalmist promises that the Lord will keep one from all harm.

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

You want to help your group to consider what elements are important in praising God. You will emphasize the importance of gratitude in praising God.

Your group will consider how worship makes us want to share the gospel with others.

You want to enjoy the psalms studied for the beauty of the praise expressed and help your group or worshipping congregation to experience worship as they study.

**For Personal Reflection:**

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

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

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

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***The Worshipping Congregation***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—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.

**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**

Psalm 67; Psalm 108:1-6; Psalm 121

#### **Background Text**

Psalm 75; Psalm 115

#### **Main Idea**

Worship involves prayer for God's grace, presence, and blessing and then moves to seek His blessing for all peoples of the earth. God invites all people to praise Him because He rules the world fairly in justice.

#### **Questions to Explore**

How do we avoid praise that focuses only on our own needs?

Is it in fact praise if we are concerned only with music which pleases us or teaching or preaching which we enjoy?

Will worship encourage us to think of others and how to share the gospel with them?

#### **Teaching Aim**

Learners will consider what elements are important in praising God.

Learners will think of the importance of gratitude in praising God.

Learners will consider how worship makes us want to share the gospel with others.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Make copies of the **Main Idea**, the **Questions to Explore** and the **Teaching Aim**. Give these to three different people to read as an introduction to the lesson. Give time for comments if appropriate.

## **Guide the Study:**

Say: Our topic today is The Worshipping Congregation. As we meet together to study and worship, we are a worshipping congregation. Think carefully as we study the Scripture passages about how our congregation incorporates or fails to incorporate the elements given in these passages.

Have someone read Psalm 67: 1-7 and then reread verse 1.

Explain: The words **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us** are familiar to us.

Ask if anyone remembers when these words were used in a worship service. (Some may have heard them as a closing benediction)

Have someone read Numbers 6:22-27.

Continue: This passage reflects the early days in the life of the Israelite nation under Moses' leadership. Many admonitions for living together in a healthful and peaceful way have been given. In this passage, Moses is to tell Aaron and his sons who will be the priestly line from this time into the future how to bless the people. The words are simple, but profound. "The 'Aaronic blessing' in Numbers is effective because it originated at God's initiative. This invocation does not invoke an outward blessing of material goods or circumstances, but inward blessing. The blessing was God Himself. The prayer of blessing in formal worship assures the people of God's involvement in daily life, work and family" (Disciple's Study Bible. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, p. 170).

Ask: Is the blessing only for the Israelite people? (No, the passage in Psalms emphasizes the nations, the peoples, the nations of the earth)

Explain that "selah" may mean "pause and calmly think about that".

Comment: This is an amazing missionary perspective for a people who were the Chosen Ones. This is many years before Christ's coming.

Add: One way God extends His salvation to all the nations is through blessing the harvest. This act leads all peoples to reverence and worship Him.

Ask: What is the teaching of verse 4

? (The nations must be glad and sing for joy because God rules the peoples justly)

Summarize the following:

Praise always involves thanksgiving. In this Psalm we see thanksgiving for the fact that God's face shines upon His people. He rules with fairness. The land will yield its harvest. "Psalm 67 is a hymn of thanksgiving, the primary purpose of which is the expression of gratitude for the beneficent Presence of God. Its occasion appears to have been a gathering for worship during or just following the time of harvest, probably the Feast of Booths (Lev. 23:34; Deut. 16:13-17). But a great deal more is involved in this hymn than thankfulness for a good crop, for the psalmist uses the occasion to remind the congregation of the perpetual bounty of God's Presence, a bounty of which the harvest of the soil is but one manifestation" (The Broadman Bible Commentary, p. 303).

Have someone read Psalm 108: 1-6.

Ask for definitions of a "steadfast heart".

Add to that: How is the steadfast heart of the writer expressed in this psalm. (singing, waking early to worship, acknowledging God's love and faithfulness)

Tell the group that Paul had this idea when he wrote in Ephesians 4:14 ***Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.***

Comment on God's love and faithfulness.

Comment: God's love and faithfulness are extolled. "The love and faithfulness of God are virtually synonymous here. God's love is constant, dependable, unchanging" (Disciple's Study Bible, p. 708). Psalms 100: 5-6 states this truth ***For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*** "God is not fickle. His good, loving faithfulness remains the same forever. We can count on Him" (Disciple's Study Bible, p. 712).

Ask: Does this Psalm have the missionary perspective of Psalm 67? (Yes, see v.v. 3, 5)

Have someone read Psalm 121 and then repeat verses 1-2.

Determine with your group what the question is that is being asked?

Question: How important and universal is that question?

Explain that the psalmist had in mind the hills of Zion, where Yahweh's Presence was known specially to dwell.

Share experiences of finding comfort from looking toward the mountains which you may have visited.

Ask: What is the answer to the question "Where does my help come from?"

Have someone read verses 3-4.

Seek an answer: What is the beautiful promise of these verses? (He keeps us from falling; He watches over us day and night)

Have someone read verses 5-8.

Now ask: What are the promises given here? (The Lord watches over us; we will be kept from harm; He will watch over our lives – our coming and going – now and forevermore)

Have someone reread the entire Psalm 121.

Inquire how this psalm gives encouragement.

### **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 move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask the people who have read the Main Idea, Questions to Explore and Teaching Aim to read these again. Give time after each one for comments from the group.

**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.

### *The Worshipping Congregation* Psalms 67; 108:1-6; 121

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.

#### **JUDGING THE SONGS YOU SING**

Choose one of your favorite praise songs.

Consider the words and ask how the song fits the criteria for worship emphasized in these psalms.

Does it praise God and indicate that He is a God of all peoples?

Is there an element of thanksgiving present?

Does it speak of God's love and faithfulness?

Does it emphasize God's care and protection?

# 3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

## Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

### *The Worshipping Congregation* Hebrews 10: 19-25

#### **Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

**Great and Mighty**, *The Worship Hymnal* #20; CCLI #16495

**I Worship You, Almighty God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #16; CCLI #20807

#### **Offering:**

#### **Praying for the World:**

More than 1,000 years old, Hanoi is the capital and government center of Vietnam. Showing evidence of its ancient history, it also exhibits rapid growth in modern technology. Less than 1 percent of Hanoi's 6.5 million people are Christian. Most Hanoians deny that ancestor worship is a religion, but it controls their lives and hinders their response to the Good News of the Gospel.

#### **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.**

## Let Us Draw Near to God – The Worshipping Congregation Hebrews 10: 19-25

***Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.***

***And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.***

The worshipping congregation is a group of “brothers and sisters” in Christ all of whom are redeemed by faith in Christ’s sacrifice. The Old Testament references in this passage are clear. It refers to the need for a High Priest to sacrifice once a year to God. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and make the sacrifice on behalf of the Jewish people.

But now a new and living way exists because of Christ’s death. All believers have access to God. All the faithful can draw near to God with a sincere heart.

There is the image of the priests having been washed with pure water before they exercised their religious duties. Christians are all priests and ministers of God. Our baptism is an expression of the washing of sin already accomplished in our profession of faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

This beautiful passage speaks to the worshipping congregation. We meet together to worship God and to encourage one another. Our meeting and worshipping together should help us to ***“hold unswervingly to the hope we profess”*** and worshipping should help us want to be more loving and more desirous of doing good deeds.

We must not give up meeting together to worship. Many things in today’s world make it difficult to be faithful in meeting together. Family needs, children’s sports, the need for rest and recreation, the ability to shop for groceries or other needs all tempt us to miss meeting together. At first it may be only occasionally that we are absent from corporate worship. But it easily becomes a habit and returning is made difficult by the

embarrassment we feel when we realize that it has been too long since we have been together with fellow believers.

This is particularly true in a home church where everyone's presence is so important to the whole body. Probably few believers make a deliberate choice to miss worshipping with others. Even in Paul's day, it was an issue. He speaks a warning "**Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.**" Giving up meeting together had become a habit and habits of any kind are hard to break.

But we are to "**draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith**" and we are "**to encourage one another**".

### **Call to Commitment:**

We come together to praise God, to give thanks for his goodness, to acknowledge his care and providence in our lives. Our praising God encourages fellow believers. We have examined three psalms which help us to do that. The words of Psalm 67: 3-4 express that praise.

**May the peoples praise you, O God;  
May all the peoples praise you.  
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
For you rule the peoples justly  
And guide the nations of the earth. Selah.**

Let us pause and calmly think about that!

### **Concluding the Service:**

We close today with thanksgiving for our worshipping congregation, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We pray that each one of us may be encouraged and strengthened in the tasks and responsibilities of the week to come. We invoke the old, old blessing given by Moses to Aaron and passed on to us in the Psalms.

**May God be gracious to us and bless us  
And make his face shine upon us. Selah.**

Sing this song or one of the others suggested for today's session.

**We Will Glorify, The Worship Hymnal #22; CCLI #19038**

Copy the following and give to three different people to read at the beginning of the Bible Study period. One will read the Main Idea; another will read the Questions to Explore and a third will read the Teaching Aim.

+++++(Cut here)++++

### **Main Idea**

Worship involves prayer for God’s grace, presence, and blessing and then moves to seek His blessing for all peoples of the earth. God invites all people to praise Him because He rules the world fairly in justice.

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### **Questions to Explore**

How do we avoid praise that focuses only on our own needs?

Is it in fact praise if we are concerned only with music which pleases us or teaching or preaching which we enjoy?

Will worship encourage us to think of others and how to share the gospel with them?

+++++(Cut here)++++

### **Teaching Aim**

Learners will consider what elements are important in praising God.

Learners will think of the importance of gratitude in praising God.

Learners will consider how worship makes us want to share the gospel with others.