

Worship, Community, Mission: So What Do We Mean By Worship?

1 Peter 2:4-10

In your preparation for the meeting, make sure you are setting aside enough time for self-examination (including “corporate self”--e.g. your CG, your DSC congregation), confession, and repentance.

Discussion 1: A House for God’s Presence & A People for His Praise

Have you ever noticed the abundance of definite articles (“a” and “the”) in Scripture with reference to God’s people? In the primary text alone, we see:

^{ESV} **1 Peter 2:4-10** As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as **a spiritual house**, to be **a holy priesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"^{1 8} and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹ But you are **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession**, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not **a people**, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- ***Discuss other references/metaphors for the Church that are distinctively corporate/singular.*** [Body of Christ, Bride of Christ, ...]
- ***What does this say about God’s design for worship?***

[Review the 4 spheres of worship from the sermon (everything/everywhere; private, family, corporate). What are the implications for lone-ranger Christianity or self-styled spirituality?]

- ***How are we doing?***

[*Humbly/gently--there is plenty of “ouch” here for everyone. Does corporate worship receive appropriate priority? Do you come prepared to worship? (Are you late for your entertainment as often as you are to corporate worship services?). Are you worshipping in community? (What’s the difference between corporate worship and a bunch of people engaging in private worship at the same time & place?-- Are you as unfamiliar with the people next to you at corporate worship as you are with*

the people next to you at the movie theater?) Are you a spectator/consumer or part of the worshipping Body? ...]

Discussion 2: The Language of our Faith

We won't apologize for teaching you the language of our faith. Sometimes words in common use just aren't sufficient, especially with respect to describing God and His nature, character, and attributes. Review these:

- *transcendent--*

[Big, beyond, without limitation, across all boundaries]

- *imminent--*

[close/near... in a transcendent way. *Have someone read Psalm 139:1-18*]

– *The Language Barrier*

If you've ever been a part of one of our Ambassador Courses, you'll be familiar with the importance of making sure you really are speaking the same language with people. How would you define:

- *Worship--*
- *Praise--*

[Pop-evangelicalism has in many ways equated these terms with music, or the musical portion of a worship service. (In some cases, the slow songs are called "worship" while the fast ones are called "praise") Work through what you mean when you use the words... or what you should mean ... Use these:

- **Romans 12:1** *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies** as a **living sacrifice**, holy and **acceptable** to God, which is your **spiritual worship**.*
- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *...do you not know that your body is a **temple** of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*
- **Ephesians 2:19-22** [sister passage to 1 Pet 2] *you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the **cornerstone**, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy **temple** in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a **dwelling place** for God by the Spirit.*
- **Philippians 2:17** *Even if I am to be poured out as a **drink offering** upon the **sacrificial offering** of your faith, I am glad...*
- **Philippians 4:18** *having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a **sacrifice** acceptable and pleasing to God.*

- **Hebrews 13:15-16** Through him then let us continually offer up **sacrifice** of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such **sacrifices** are pleasing to God.
- **1 Peter 2:5** you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a **spiritual house**, to be a holy **priesthood**, to offer **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal **priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.]

- *Is this the way you understand and practice worship?*

[Most important part of the study... use the scriptures above to characterize NT worship and encourage self-examination.]

Discussion 3: A Precious Cornerstone

- *What is the importance of the cornerstone in construction?*

[Must be precisely cut and laid and must be strong to support the weight ... else the building will be poorly constructed or unstable. Use today's text plus these.]

^{ESV} **Isaiah 28:16** therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ^a"Behold, I am the one who has laid¹ as a foundation ^bin Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'¹⁷ And I will make justice ^athe line, and righteousness ^bthe plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter."

^{ESV} **Matthew 21:42** Jesus said to them, ^a"Have you never read in the Scriptures: ^b"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;¹ this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God ^awill be taken away from you and given to a people ^bproducing its fruits.⁴⁴ And ^athe one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and ^bwhen it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

- *Pick out and discuss the various descriptions/characteristics of the Cornerstone.*

[Laid by God, tested, precious, sure, marked by justice & righteousness, rejected by men, becomes "chief corner" stone, solid, heavy ...]

- *Pick out and discuss the various roles/actions of the Cornerstone.*

[A sure foundation, defines perfection, stone of stumbling/rock of offense, object of belief (faith), instrument of destruction]

- *Dwell on the perfections of our Cornerstone.*

[Apply the previous ones (save "precious" for the next topic) to our risen, exalted and reigning King and perfect Savior Jesus Christ.]

- *With that in mind, define "precious"*

[Apart from the One, unique, perfect, ... Savior, all of mankind would be hopeless rebels and deserving objects of wrath before a Holy God. Instead... *have folks in your group give gospel summaries.*]

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Discussion 1: A House for God's Presence & A People for His Praise

Note all the definite articles ("a" "the") in Scripture with reference to God's people. Read: **1 Peter 2:4-10**

- *Think of other references/metaphors in Scripture for the Church that are distinctively corporate/singular.*
- *What does this say about God's design for worship? (review 4 spheres)*
- *How are we doing?*

Discussion 2: The Language of our Faith

Sometimes words in common use just aren't sufficient, especially with respect to describing God and His nature, character, and attributes. Review these:

- *transcendent--*
- *imminent--*
- *The Language Barrier*

As an ambassador for Christ, it is important to make sure you really are speaking the same language with people. What do you mean by:

- *Worship--*
- *Praise--*

New Testament worship texts for reference:

Romans 12:1 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies** as a **living sacrifice**, holy and **acceptable** to God, which is your **spiritual worship**. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** ...do you not know that your body is a **temple** of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Ephesians 2:19-22 [sister passage to 1 Pet 2] *you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the **cornerstone**, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy **temple** in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a **dwelling place** for God by the Spirit.*

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- *Is this the way you understand and practice worship?*

Discussion 3: A Precious Cornerstone

- *What is the importance of the cornerstone in construction?*

Read Isa. 28:16-17; Matt. 21:42-44)

- *Pick out and discuss the various descriptions/characteristics of the Cornerstone.*
- *Pick out and discuss the various roles/actions of the Cornerstone.*
- *Dwell on the perfections of our Cornerstone.*
- *With that in mind, define "precious"*