

INTERMEDIATE DISCIPLE

Worship: love responding to love

Lovers worship. That is, they delight to express love and appreciation for their lover. Same with Disciples.

Worship is *love responding to love*, a continual expression of praise to our great Lover God, for who he is and what he does. Sometimes we worship alone. Sometimes we worship together, joining with others and even the whole universe to praise God. *Psalms are forever telling us to praise God and telling whales and fruit trees and snowstorms to keep doing what they would do even if we didn't tell them...* (CS Lewis) As our love for God – Father, Son, Spirit – deepens, worship becomes more heartfelt and authentic. *(Illustrate this in your own life, how you enjoy expressing love to loved ones, how it's similar with God. Discuss Lewis' quote, this new perspective of inviting the universe to worship with you)*

Worship becomes a *Get-Together* discipline as we invite others to praise God with us. ...as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: *"Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?"* (CS Lewis) As we worship, others learn how fabulous God is, the God we've come to know through Jesus: how perfect he is, how good and faithful, how powerful and wise, how merciful... the rainbow of God's personality and activity. *Behold, our God! (Isaiah 40.9) (What attributes of God cause you to worship him? Suggest ways for the Disciple to make worship a daily activity, reflecting on God's character, praising him habitually.)*

Worship isn't limited to a singing event at church. We're made for continual worship. *I'll praise you seven times a day (Ps 119.164).* We're most authentically alive as we worship. *(Discuss struggles you've had learning to worship, how you seek to "worship in spirit and truth" (John 4.24), how you try to worship God through the week, not just Sundays. Help the Disciple develop reminders to worship God during the day).* Worship is a struggle because we used to worship things other than God – *idols* – before we were believers. Satan tried to bribe Jesus into worshipping him *(Matt 4.8-9)* Often we worship ourselves, or other people, or the evil one's god-

substitutes. (Read the temptation of Jesus (Mt 4.1-11). Discuss why it's easy to worship other things besides God. What idols might be in our lives?)

Nuts and Bolts: How to worship? The Believer's prayer book, Psalms, trains us.

With all my being: *...all that I am...*(Ps. 103.1)

With my mind: *I ponder all your great works...* (Ps. 143.5)

With my heart: *I love you, Lord. You are my strength.* (Ps 18.1, King David's autobiographical song)

With various methods: singing, speaking, writing, praying, dancing, with creativity, with instruments (trumpets, harps, lyre, tambourine, strings, pipes, drums, etc)

With various moods: Joy, wonder, gladness, thanks, excitement,

With various intensity: silence, meditation, quiet, relaxation, trembling, energy, passion, shouts, leaping

With body language: *...let us kneel before the Lord our Maker* (Ps. 95.6); *lifting my hands to you in prayer.* (Ps. 63.4); *Come, everyone! Clap your hands!* (Ps. 47.1)

We worship in a manner appropriate to our personality, the group, the culture and the occasion. (read the Psalms verses. Help a Disciple see the diversity and variety of forms worship can take. Discuss their comfort zone and yours. Encourage them to be expressive, especially in private praise.)

Suggestion: Be alert during church worship. Sing from the heart. Concentrate on the words. In private worship, personalize the Psalms. Express their emotions and sentiments to God from your heart.

Encouragement: CS Lewis says praise is *tuning the instruments*. We're rehearsing a great symphony of praise with all creation, honoring Jesus. **Are you tuning your instrument?**

Small things done in great love will change the world, one person at a time...