

CITYWEST CHURCH

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DEEP DIVE 2026 - WORSHIP

Worship is not merely an expression toward God — it is participation in the divine life made present by Word and Spirit.

*We gather. We sing. We lift our hands. We wait on God.
And in those moments, we testify: God is here.*

God has always chosen to make Himself known through gathered, surrendered, Word-centered, Spirit-filled worship.

From David's tabernacle to the upper room, from Psalm singing to Pentecost fire, from temple cloud to Revelation's throne room — worship is the God-ordained place where heaven and earth overlap.

Over the next six weeks we're going to explore worship through the life of David, through the Temple, through the New Testament, and through the lens of what it means to be a Spirit-filled people.

Because if we're honest, worship can sometimes become so familiar that we stop asking what it's actually for.

We sing songs.

We lift our hands.

We gather every Sunday.

But why? Why has worship always been central to God's people?

Why does Scripture devote so much space to it? Why does heaven itself appear to be centred around worship?

And perhaps the biggest question:

What actually happens when God's people worship? For many people, worship is simply the music before the sermon. For others it's emotional expression. For some it's personal preference.

But the Bible presents worship as something far deeper. The Bible presents worship as a place of encounter. A place where God meets His people.

A place where heaven and earth overlap. A place where hearts are formed and lives are changed. And nobody understood that better than David.

The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most—
is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's
perfections and meditating in his Temple.

⁵For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary.
He will place me out of reach on a high rock.

Psalm 27:4-5 (NLT)

Pressure has a way of revealing what matters most.

When life is busy, when decisions are difficult, when the future feels uncertain, what is the thing we reach for first?

For David, the answer was remarkably clear. David was a king.

He carried military responsibility. Political responsibility. Family responsibility.

He led a nation.

Yet when David speaks about the deepest desire of his heart, he doesn't ask for victory.

He doesn't ask for influence. He doesn't ask for protection. He doesn't ask for success.

He says:

"One thing I ask."

One thing.

Not ten things. Not a wish list. Not a collection of priorities.

One thing. To dwell in the presence of God.

And I think this immediately confronts modern Christianity because we often seek God for what He can do rather than simply for who He is.

We seek His blessing. His provision. His wisdom. His breakthrough.

And God graciously gives all those things.

But David understood something deeper: The greatest gift God gives is Himself.

1. DAVID WAS HUNGRY FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

Psalm 27 is not an isolated prayer. It is the consistent theme of David's life.

O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.

Psalm 63:1 (NLT)

David doesn't say:

"My soul thirsts for answers."

"My soul thirsts for success."

"My soul thirsts for comfort."

He says: "My soul thirsts for You."

The deepest hunger of the human heart is not ultimately for achievement.

It is for God.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven's Armies. ²I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.

Psalm 84:1-2 (NLT)

A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else!

I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.

Psalm 84: 10 (NLT)

Think about that.

One day in God's presence is worth more than a thousand days somewhere else.

David understood that the presence of God is not an accessory to life.

It is life.

In 2 Samuel 6, David becomes so passionate about bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.

The Ark represented God's covenant presence among His people.

David understood that Israel's future would never ultimately be secured by military strength.

It would be secured by God's presence. The nation needed more than strategy.

The nation needed God.

And can I suggest that the same is true today?

Families need more than good plans. Marriages need more than communication tools.

Churches need more than programs.

We need God.

Because the presence of God is not a ministry resource.

It is the Church's inheritance.

2. BEFORE WORSHIP WAS MUSIC, IT WAS LONGING.

One of the mistakes we make in modern church culture is reducing worship to music.

We ask: Did I like the songs? Was it my style? Was it too loud? Too quiet? Too modern? Too traditional?

But worship existed long before sound systems.

Worship existed before bands.

Before instruments. Before stages. Before playlists. At its core, worship begins with desire.

Worship begins when the heart says:

"I want God."

But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

John 4: 23-24 (NLT)

The issue is not merely external activity. The issue is the posture of the heart.

Because you can sing every word and still be far from God.

You can stand in a worship service and never actually worship.

Worship begins when hunger awakens.

Before worship is expression, it is longing.

Before worship is music, it is desire.

Before worship is sound, it is surrender.

3. GOD HAS ALWAYS GIVEN HIMSELF TO HIS PEOPLE.

Throughout Scripture, God does not merely give information. He gives Himself.

In Eden, God walked with humanity. In the Tabernacle, God dwelt among His people. In the Temple, His glory filled the house.

In Jesus, God became flesh and lived among us. At Pentecost, God filled His people with His Spirit.

The story of Scripture is the story of God's desire to dwell with humanity.

The goal has never simply been forgiveness. The goal has always been communion.

God wants relationship. God wants nearness. God wants His people to know Him.

4. WORSHIP IS PARTICIPATION, NOT OBSERVATION.

You cannot spectate your way into intimacy. You cannot observe your way into transformation.

You cannot watch someone else worship and expect it to shape your heart.

Worship invites us to enter.

To engage. To respond. To offer ourselves. To join heaven's song.

To become participants rather than observers. This is why Scripture consistently uses physical language:

Lift your hands. Bow down. Sing aloud. Clap your hands. Kneel before the Lord.

Not because physical actions earn God's favour. But because worship involves the whole person.

1. Come Hungry

Don't simply attend church.

Arrive expecting God to meet you.

2. Prepare Your Heart

Don't rush into worship distracted.

Create space for God.

3. Participate Fully

Sing. Pray. Listen. Respond.

Don't stand on the edge.

Enter in.

4. Pursue God During the Week

Sunday worship is not meant to sustain you for seven days. Develop personal rhythms of worship, prayer, Scripture, and surrender.

Worship does not begin with skill or preference. It begins with hunger. And hungry people always find God.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. David said, "One thing I ask" (Psalm 27:4). What does that reveal about his priorities, and what are some things that can compete for first place in our own lives?

How can we cultivate a deeper hunger for God's presence rather than simply seeking what He can do for us?

2. Worship is participation, not observation. What practical changes could help you engage more fully in worship—both when gathered with the church and throughout the week?

Which of the four challenges (Come Hungry, Prepare Your Heart, Participate Fully, Pursue God During the Week) do you most need to focus on right now, and why?