

Call to worship: (Romans 12:1 The Message) So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life- your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life- and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

Hymn: Light of the World *Tim Hughes (born 1978) © 2000 Thankyou Music* CCLI Number: 204063 Singing the Faith 75

1 Light of the world,
You stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see
beauty that made this heart adore You,
hope of a life spent with You.
*So here I am to worship,
here I am to bow down,
here I am to say that You're my God;
and You're altogether lovely,
altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.*

2 King of all days,
oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly You came
to the earth You created,
all for love's sake became poor.
Refrain

And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross.
(Repeat)
Refrain

Prayer: God who is great, God who is good, you have created us out of your love and for your love. You have made our hearts to long for you and nothing else will fully satisfy. You are the Creator of time and space, Saviour beyond time and space. You are present in the marvellous and majestic, the intricate and miniscule. We praise and adore you. We bow in love and adoration.

Forgive us Lord when we see worship as a chore, when our worship is not worthy of you. Forgive us Lord when we look at what we can get out of worship for ourselves. Forgive our selfishness. Forgive our greed and our pride. For you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. We come now thankful that through Jesus Christ your Son our sins are forgiven. AMEN

Reading: Psalm 145 (A psalm of praise. Of David)

Reflection: Why Worship?

Why bother? Do you sometimes wake up on a Sunday morning and think, "I wish I could have a Sunday off?" Or perhaps all you can think of saying to the preacher at the end of the Service is "nice hymns today," when you struggle to remember what the preacher has said.

Why worship? Perhaps before we answer that question, let's look at another question.

What is worship? Preaching, reading of Scripture, prayer, baptism and the Lord's Supper, giving of alms, oh and singing of course!" These are all different elements of worship, each will speak differently to different people. How often when one person says "nice hymns" another says "I didn't know any of the hymns today"? Or one person fails to receive any message from the preacher's words and another experiences God's inspired truth through what the preacher has said. Worship is about our relationship with God.

Who and what is God? Psalm 145 is packed from beginning to end with words and reasons why we should praise God. One simple reason we worship is that "God is great and God is good." *What does this mean exactly?* For me a great God is a God who is bigger than I can comprehend, is more knowledgeable than the most qualified scientist, more just than the wisest judge. God is divine. David uses words like beyond understanding; splendour, beauty, richness; mighty, wonderful, awesome. Have you ever looked at a painting and thought it looked beautiful, then examined it more closely and marvelled at the layers and detail that has gone into that work of art? Or listened to a piece of music that fills a concert hall, then focused on an individual musical instrument and how a melody weaves its way through the piece. My husband enjoys photography and one of his favourite photos is of a fly, not my

favourite animal. However when I look at what God has created even in this unwelcome member of the insect family, I cannot but marvel at His greatness. God is great and God is good.

What is a good God? For me this a description of a God who loves us, not from afar, but beside us. A good God, is one who sent His only Son to earth in human form, to live among us, and to ultimately die for us. Again David recognises how good God is, abundant goodness, rich in love, trustworthy, faithful. He lifts those who fall or who are bowed down.

So, if worship is an expression of our relationship with a God who is great and who is good, then we return to the question, *why worship?* I recently attended Spring Harvest, from the comfort of my own home, rather than from a bracing Butlins at Skegness! The theme of the week was worship, and started with the question, why worship? Tim Hughes, wrote the first chapter of the Spring Harvest book entitled "Why Worship? Insights into the wonder of worship." He says, we are created to worship, its part of our DNA. We are told we are ALL made in God's image, and we worship the One who made us, who knew us before we were born, who designed us to be like Him. When we worship God we find out what it means to be "fearfully and wonderfully made" as the psalmist says in Psalm 139

So how do we respond? If we look at the bible, there are many examples of people whose natural response to an encounter with God was to worship. All these people saw worship as a natural response, a gift given to them by God.

How do you see worship? Is it a chore or even just a task, something you do, or is it a gift, a joy or a delight, a natural response to God's abundant love? I have to admit there have been times when I have asked myself, "why can't I have a Sunday off?" However, God is a gracious God, slow to anger and rich in love. He upholds the fallen and lifts the bowed down. We are all invited into a relationship with God, to worship Him, in the good and the bad, the extraordinary and the mundane.

Worship incorporates all of life, Sundays, Mondays, any days, wherever and whatever you are doing. I was preparing this message it got me to thinking about my life and how I can worship God in the everyday. I recently got called for jury service for the first time. How could I worship God in the courtroom? God is great and good, he is merciful and just. God is faithful, he lifts those who have fallen and are bowed down. Applicable to the courtroom?

This week think about worshipping God in the mundane and the ordinary, in your work and in your rest. Worship God in reading the scriptures and in your prayer life. And if you really want to play a worship song or your favourite hymn at full blast and sing praises to the Lord! AMEN

Prayer: Great and good Father, I will praise your name forever, every day I will praise you. Thank you that you forgive us when we forget to praise you, and that you lift us when we fall. May our worship be worthy of your name, and may we glorify you in our whole lives. Thank you that the relationship with you is not only personal but also universal. May we sing your praises, may we speak your word, may we bring prayer to you, all as a gift so freely given to us. AMEN

Hymn: How Great Thou Art *Stuart K Hine (1899-1989) © 1953 Stuart K Hine* CCLI Number: 204063

Singing the Faith 82

1. O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*
2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;
3. And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die-I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:
4. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home-what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

Blessing: May the God who is great be gracious to us. May the God who is good grant us his blessings. May the God who is just have mercy on us. And may the God who is love give us joy and peace, now and forever. AMEN