

**"Being Church God's Way"**  
(Values that Determine Vision)

Study 4

**Worship II**

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Read Psalm 27 slowly, letting the poetry sink in.

1. What verses resonate with you? What verses have little meaning for you?
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Worship has become a divisive subject in Evangelical circles in the past thirty years (at least), to the point that the term "worship wars" is used in common parlance.

2. What are people fighting about in these "wars?"
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A lack of common understanding of what worship is only adds to the conflicts.

**What is worship, anyway?**

A story

*I (Donna) was frustrated in my worship work one spring several years ago and called my mentor for help. The Regent community didn't seem to be "getting" it. Some were concerned about issues that I thought were peripheral, and others were missing the significance of what I thought was central.*

*My mentor, Eugene, told me a story, as he always does when I'm at a dead end.*

*A friend of his, a seminary professor, was in a similar situation, frustrated with his students, who weren't "getting worship," and decided to take them on a field trip.*

*He took them to a home for Alzheimer's patients. The staff there were called "memory facilitators" and their job was to repeat things to their patients, especially their name and the names of their loved ones. As the seminary students spent time with these patients who were losing their memories and observing what the staff had to do, over and over again, to help their patients, the seminary professor's lessons started to make sense to them.*

Worshipping together as a community is a multi-layered event, to be sure, but one of the most central aspects of genuine worship that is true to the Biblical witness is that worship is to remind us of who we are and whose we are.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Israel's worship was often a recounting of what God had done for them, especially the liberation from slavery in Egypt. Their whole calendar year, including feasts and special days and the congregational worship of God each week, was a constant reminder of *who they were as a people and whose they were as a people.*

The longest book in the Bible, the Psalms, is filled with hymns, poetry and prayers in which the psalmists bring to God their pain, their anger and their frustrations as well as their joy and hope and faith. By coming just as they are, intentionally, into God's presence, they are acknowledging who they are and whose they are.

Because worship involves God and humans both, (who God is and who we are) a lack of understanding of who God really is and what it means to be fully human also adds to the conflict.

**3. What does it mean that worship is all about God and all about us, both/and?**

◆ Let's ask first, **who is God?**

Brainstorm all the names and images for God that you can think of.

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- ◆ Has your understanding of who *God* is, changed as you've matured? How? Why?

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Parker Palmer reminds us in his Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation, that we will never finally answer the questions "Who am I?" and "Whose am I?" but that we are called to *live the questions* throughout our lives. [p. 95]

Do you think that living the questions could be a part of what it means to live by faith?

4. Next let's ask, **who are we as humans?**

Brainstorm words that describe who we are as humans.

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5. Has your understanding of what it means to be fully human changed as you've matured? Why? How?

Do you think that living the question of who I am could be part of what it means to live in dynamic relationship with *God*?

6. What questions do you have about who *God* is, or what it means to be human, or what worship is?

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In addition to continued discussion of these questions in your small groups, you are invited to *Worship Matters* conversation every Thursday at 10.30am in Room 207 for dynamic conversation about these subjects and more!