

WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT WORSHIP?

Robert Morris

Focus During times of worship, we meet with God and are changed in His presence.

Open What's your favorite "oldies" song?

Read Many people view times of worship as the appetizer before the entrée of the Word. Jesus promised that if we'd open the door of our hearts to Him, He would come in and *dine* with us (Revelation 3:20). It's not just about *what* we are eating, but with *whom*.

Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush teaches us that we encounter God when we look, listen and learn in His presence (Exodus 3:1–5). First, we must stop to look—*turn aside* from the stuff of life—and focus upon God. When we fix our focus on Him, we are changed in His presence (2 Corinthians 3:18).

We also must listen for His voice. Exodus 3:4 says that the Lord called to Moses when He saw that Moses had turned aside to look. God didn't speak to Moses until He knew that He had his attention. If we really want to hear God's voice, we must take the time to linger in His presence and listen to hear Him.

We learn from God in His presence. God will teach us His ways—*why* He does what He does. Worship changes our perspective, just as it changed David's (Psalm 73:1–17).

Worship is not a warm-up; it's a time when God wants us to have an encounter with Him that changes our lives.

Talk

1. Read about Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush in Exodus 3:1–5. In general, do you find it easy or difficult to "turn aside" and focus

your attention on God during times of praise and worship? Why do you think that is?

2. Why do you think God waits until He has our attention before He will speak to us?
3. Read the following scriptures. What does each one tell us about what happens or is available to us in God's presence?
Psalm 16:11 Psalm 9:3 Psalm 68:8
Acts 3:19 Psalm 21:6
4. Psalm 103:7 says, "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel." (God showed the children of Israel *what* He did, but showed Moses *why*.) How does learning God's *ways* change our perspective? Share an example of a time when God showed you His way that changed your perspective.
5. What kind of relationship does God want to have with us, according to John 15:15? Does this change your understanding about times of worship? How?

Live

1. Have you had an experience with God during a time of worship that changed you in some way? What happened, and why was it meaningful to you?
2. Read Psalm 95:1–7, then take a few minutes as a group to thank God for His greatness and invite Him to speak to you.

Pray

Thank God that there is peace, power and fullness of joy in His presence. Thank Him that He wants you to be His friend. Ask Him to help you to turn aside from the distractions of life and focus your attention on Him. Invite Him to speak to you now, and wait to hear His voice.