

LONGING TO WORSHIP

By Bob Young

In my observation, many Christians have never experienced life-changing worship week after week. Too many Christians think of worship as boring. In a small group planning meeting, one sister remarked, “I don’t want to do church again!”

People in the world often think of church as boring. They have never seen the fun, the adventure that can characterize God’s people assembled for worship. For much of my ministry, weekly worship was the high point of my week: “It just doesn’t get any better than this!” Wow! The opportunity to be together and celebrate God, God’s presence, God’s actions, God’s message for today’s life. Singing, crying, remembering, rejoicing, sharing, laughing, seeing God more clearly in Jesus.

Many churches do not have clearly defined understandings of why Christians come together in different group settings and the unique purpose of the different gatherings—celebration, class, and cell.

Celebration. Large group assemblies provide a setting for worship characterized by inspiration, information, and celebration.

Here is a declaration of our shared faith and hope.

Classes. Bible study is a time of deepening and expanding understandings of our shared faith.

Here is an opportunity for the body to explore how the shared faith is to be lived out.

Cells. Small groups allow application, edification, incarnation, and preparation.

Here I prepare my mind and my heart for my unique kingdom service, in a context of trust and confidentiality, encouraged by those who know me best.

- In our corporate worship, we celebrate God’s greatness, his great love demonstrated in Jesus. We humbly celebrate God’s life-changing presence. We declare faith and hope. We see new believers baptized, we share stories of multiplication, we hear testimony of God’s presence and direction. We see firsthand that God is moving among us.
- In worship, we demonstrate to visitors the joy of Jesus.
- In worship, our lives are changed. If we do not leave worship with our identity reinforced, recommitted, renewed, we have missed a primary purpose of the church’s time together.
- In corporate worship, we set the tone for our daily worship during the coming week. For many, daily worship depends on a life-changing Sunday before the throne, celebrating the presence of God.

I have known and experienced the power of worship, weekly responses, weekly baptisms, singing through the tears, weeping while eating the Supper. I long for a weekly worship experience where Christians participate in worship from an overflow of God’s presence, power, and purpose. Such worship is not worked up, promoted, produced, or performed. Genuine heartfelt worship naturally expresses itself with our minds and our emotions, balancing inspiration, information, and celebration. The presence of God radiates throughout the assembly, reflecting God’s order, God’s power, and God’s Spirit. In turn, the presence of God radiates forth from our lives throughout the week.