

Where else do you worship? Do you worship at the temple of the sun on Papamoa beach? Do you worship at the temple of consumerism at Bayfair? Do you worship at the mighty Eden Park, it's a bit of a long drive but boy it is worth it! I want to talk about worship today as responding to God. I want to talk about worship today as the final leg of our quadrilateral of faith formation, we pray, we read we ruminates and respond.

My friends, I want to encourage you to worship, to give God the credit that He deserves, to give Him the acknowledgement He deserves, and to joyfully express our appreciation of Him. God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good. (Basketballers will often point to the person who passed them the ball, we should point to God.)

This is the last in our series looking at habits that we can use to keep growing as Lifelong followers of Jesus. To commit to the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. It's an interesting phrase eh, because we could argue, we should conform to Christ, to the glory of God. But that is to miss that Christ's mission is to redeem others. So to honour God is to be conformed to the image of Christ – for the sake of others.

Read, pray, ruminates, respond.

Respond, is about responding in worship.

Worship in Song

Worship in dance

Worship in your Will. Subordination.

Worship together

And all of life Worship.

I believe that God has given us song and music as a special gift for worship.

And I've asked David to share a little about sung worship.

I've chosen this reading because it tells of such a joyful expression of worship in dance. I often suppress my desire to dance in worship, I am very self-conscious and aware that I'm not good at clapping in time, but I love to dance, to make movements that express my desire for God, more of God in my life, to express my joy in God.

David was an innovator in worship, in temple worship, he wrote the songs, he encouraged the musicians and here he, the King threw off his clothes and danced with a loin cloth on, you can hardly imagine Prince Charles doing that.

David danced his heart out, in joy because the presence of God was back in the temple! When we won the Americas Cup back, we celebrated as a nation. We know how celebrate in our culture.

As we read Michal the daughter of Saul and wife of David despised him, I think it is the opposite of worship despise. And she gives him a tongue lashing. My goodness she is entitled, she gives the king a telling off, she tries to humiliates him, and he replies I will become even more undignified than this. When it comes to worship, we need to be careful which side we chose. The jubilant celebrators or the cultured despisers? Michal accuses David of dancing for the slave-girls, being a show off, but David is clear, he is dancing for an audience of one. Before God.

And notice the consequence, her contempt leaves her childless. I don't think this is complicated infertility, I suspect her tone simply meant her husband would not go in to her. Contempt had its natural consequence.

### **Worship in your will.**

The next way I want to talk about responding, is worship inside your head, inside your heart, inside your will. And here I want to use the word subordination, to put your will behind His will. We all know what insubordination is, but subordination is to gently wear a willingness to do as told. I remember working for Andrew Norton as his associate pastor and part of the call was to subordinate my ideas to his direction. I could come up with 100 ideas, but the task was to work with him and rest on the ideas that fitted into the master plan that he had come up with, with the elders. I remember within the areas I was responsible for Andrew would do it my way. It was a gentle respect for each other's role.

If you are a doctor at the hospital, you have to subordinate yourself to the DHB's plans, if you are a teacher you subordinate yourself to the principal and board's direction and if you are the principal you subordinate yourself to the board's direction. Now that sounds all very hierarchical, whereas a lot of organisations like to talk about a flat structure. Even there, there will be boundaries and guides and unity. For unity of direction is essential for any organization to thrive, Jesus said a house divided against itself cannot stand

When we worship God it is consciously saying not my will but yours God. Now I find a lot of the time God gives us huge amounts of freedom. But if you want to insist on the ability to do life your way, then you are choosing to worship something else, you are choosing to worship yourself or the dictates of our culture. Respond worship, says not my will but yours be done.

**Worship together**, you can be a Christian without going to a church, but that was neither Jesus model nor plan. God is a God of community and He wants us to rub against each other, carry each other's burdens, learn from each other and be Christ to each other. Jesus went to synagogue as was His practice. Lk 4.16

Worshipping together builds us up, don't think of worship selfishly, about what you can get; but think of it as response to God; what can you give. Don't think about the way they don't sing some of your favourite songs. Welcome to the club, I'm the pastor and they won't necessarily sing some of my favourite songs. Get over it. Maybe some of the people sing flat, or too fast, or too slow. I've sat in churches while some people have made dying symbols and other are enraptured in worship.

Or the preacher was a bit off this morning, I don't know what she was on about, or I couldn't hear him clearly. I've learnt the most about worship from some of our oldest people, who often can't manage the tune of the songs, can't hear a word that I say, but turn up as part of the community.

Finally worship as living sacrifices. Respond as do something about it:

The Presbyterian church has five faces of mission.

1. Teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith, so respond might be teaching a class, helping at little sunbeams, having a mentoring conversation with someone. We are always looking for ICONZ leaders.
2. Loving service responding to human need. So maybe you help out with a course, or with Tuesday lunch or with a myriad of ways here and overseas, the family care centre in Vanuatu.
3. Proclaiming the gospel. Respond might be telling people about Jesus, might be getting involved with Carols at the waterfront this year.

4. Seeking to transform society. Social action, join a march, write a letter, appear before a select committee, be politically active, Margaret's involvement in the national party is an expression of her worship, what she deeply believes. For another it might be involvement in the labour party or New Zealand first – we are Tauranga after all. Or local politics, or your school board or the hospital board
5. Caring for God's creation, going and picking up rubbish, choosing to avoid plastic, these are actions of mission, small but significant.

Respond.