

## CREATED TO WORSHIP

The main reason we exist is to worship God. We are created to praise and worship Him as an integral part of our fellowship with Him.

### Group Discussion

*The Westminster Catechism says that man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. If this is the case, what then are your thoughts on worship? Is it for God's pleasure or for ours?*

In Exodus 20:19, we read that the Children of Israel didn't want God to speak to them. They wanted to hear what God was to say through Moses. V19 says "And said to Moses, Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

We don't consciously and deliberately disobey God — we simply don't listen to Him. "You speak with us, ... but let not God speak with us ..." We often show our lack of desire for relationship with God by preferring to listen to His servants rather than to Him. We like to listen to tapes and sermons or testimonies from others, but ***we don't want God Himself to speak to us.***

### Group Discussion

*Why is it that we don't give God the opportunity to speak to us? Apart from the point that we only want to hear from God's servants, many people can have a desire for God but they don't seem to progress beyond a shallow relationship. Why is this?*

We should be asking this question of ourselves, "Am I constantly disappointing God ***by ignoring Him***, while He lovingly continues trying to reach me with His hand of grace?"

We can easily have the thought that we will know God has spoken to us when we see a display of His awesome power, or hear His audible voice speaking to us. God may very well speak to us this way if the situation requires, but as Elijah discovered in 1 Kings 19:11-13, God will quite often speak to us in the still small voice. God will speak to us in so many ways that aren't the obvious, so we tend to miss what He is saying.

When we finally do hear God, our response becomes, "Lord, why did I miss hearing Your voice, or why was I so insensitive and obstinate?" This is ***always*** the result once we hear God. But our real delight in finally hearing Him is mixed with the sorrow of having taken so long to do so.

### Group Discussion

*When you come before God in worship, do you listen to Him as He speaks to you or do you do all the talking? Discuss times when you have been too busy talking, and then other times where you know God has spoken specifically to you.*

Worship is not *a spectator sport, it requires participation*. It involves the "active" celebration of God by the participants. There is no room for lounge room type of *observers* in worship; no room for *spectators* sitting in the grandstand watching the "game" - everyone is meant to be involved. In other words, *when we come together to worship, we come not to observe but to connect fully with God*. Unfortunately, some people can be servants of God where they minister in His name and have known Him for years, and yet they are not close friends of God. I have even seen pastors that will stand in worship with their arms folded and treat it like a "big yawn". Other people can tend to only worship God if circumstances are good. There relationship seems to be based on emotional response.

When we are aware that God is truly present, we are able to move from praise into the expression of worship. It is vital that we are aware of His presence because worship is not done "from far off," it is the personal response from our hearts to the presence of God. As we draw near to God, we know *that He will draw near to us*.

### **Group Discussion**

*What effect is our having greater intimacy with God likely to have on the way we express our worship to Him? Discuss this.*

*Read Ps. 47:1-7 and Ps. 63:3-6 and list the various ways mentioned of praising the Lord. Now find at least two passages in the Bible where nature is exhorted to bring praises to God.*