

Small group notes – Living Like Jesus - Week 4

Living Worship 2

WELCOME - Connecting with each other (*TIMING: suggest 10 mins*)

Can you remember one time when you have wanted to help someone but something has held you back, or the time has passed? Share about it with the group, how you felt, what stops us helping etc.

WORSHIP – Connecting with God (*TIMING: suggest 10 mins*)

- Play some worship music in the background then....
- Ask different people to read aloud the following verses:
- 2 Cor 12:9a, 2 Cor 13:4, 1Cor 1:27-29, Rom 7:19
- Invite people to thank God that, like many of major characters in the bible, he chooses to use us despite our weaknesses.

WORD – Connecting with God’s thoughts: (*TIMING: suggest 20-25 mins*)

Ask someone (or better still a few people) to read Isaiah 58.

(a) **Understanding**

- The people are worshipping in ways that seem good only to themselves. They do the things they like to do, including fasting, in order to forget their troubles and ignore their problems though violence is all around them. Vv 5-10 are a classic statement of the need to link formal worship to an obedient lifestyle of service in God’s name. The OT presents the same message, and the NT echoes it many times. The kind of worship God will choose and honour is action to overcome problems. To please God, one should recognise wrongs, stop the ones doing wrong, and aid the victims (vv 6-7). If this is done as an act or prelude to worship, success will follow for ruler and people. God will be present and answer the prayers of worshipers (vv 8-9). (John Watts)
- *I ask them why they are doing these things, frequently at genuine sacrifice and even real risk to themselves. They always end up saying that that the time spent with an inner-city kid or working with a poor family makes them feel connected to people they had not felt a connection with before. The connection brings healing and gives their life a sense of meaning and purpose. Isaiah is saying that the best way to get your life together is to do something for someone else – then your light will ‘break forth’ and your own healing ‘spring up quickly’. In fact to focus on yourself and your own needs could prove to be a great obstacle to real satisfaction. (Jim Wallis)*
- As CT Studd declared, ‘If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.’ So may the God of grace help you and me to rediscover this dangerous, revolutionary, earth-transforming message, and translate it into our daily living. (Simon Guillebaud)

(b) **Applying:** The challenge of all of our lives being worship?

Questions:

- This is a challenging passage for all of us. How does it make you feel or react?
- What does the passage say to you about how God made you, and what God thinks is important in your life of worship?
- The world is in a sense endlessly needy. How do you think God sees the balance of our successes and our failures to meet that need?
- Is there something you feel God might be challenging you to do? Can you share it now?

WITNESS – Connecting with the world (*TIMING: suggest 15-20 mins*)

Perhaps use the ACTS structure from week 1 as you pray:

- for one another, basing your prayers on what has just been learnt
- for the mission of God to go forward where we live and work and your part in it
- for others who need God’s touch
- for our missionaries