



Worship It's About Your Heart

"Give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God."

Romans 6:13 (New Living Translation)

Running Sheet For Programme

Please note, these are approximate times and assume an 11:00 am start. To keep the programme flowing you will want the next person or group to be coming up as the previous group is finishing.

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| 10:50 | Prelude music |
| 11:00 | 2 songs |
| 11:06 | Welcome/Announcements |
| 11:10 | Offering – collected by children |
| | Suggestion: during offering collection, which of course is taken up by the children, data projector slides of the church family worshipping, families from your church having family worship, parents reading Bible stories to children etc – different ways of worshipping God. You could tape/video children explaining how they like worship with their families |
| 11:15 | Item - SS groups, duet or trio |
| 11:18 | Songs |
| 11:21 | Prayer - Family |
| 11:24 | Song |
| 11:27 | Reader's Theatre |
| 11:31 | Sermonette 1 |
| 11:35 | Drama – Heartless Worship |
| 11:41 | Sermonette 2 |
| 11:46 | H. Spafford Monologue |
| 11:49 | Song – <i>It is Well</i> (optional) |
| 11:51 | Second Scripture reading or instrumental music item |
| 11:53 | Sermonette 3 |
| 11:58 | Closing Song – <i>Heart of Worship</i> |
| 12:01 | Children's Ministry person to explain the key tags and thank children for their work |
| 12:03 | Closing prayer |
| 12:05 | Postlude |

Programme Outline

Video/PowerPoint – I Worship God Because...

At the start of the programme you might show a video of the children in your church stating why they worship God. Have the question asked at the start and then cut from child to child with the response. Some responses might include: He loves me; He is my friend; He is powerful; He cares for me; He made lots of good things like my mum. If you do not have the resources to make a video then maybe have powerpoint slides come up at various spaces in the programme with the child's picture and their "I worship God because..." statement. Alternatively you might have 3-4 children come up at various times in the programme and just say their "I worship God because..." (*statement*).

Welcome

The following is a script that you might like to use for Welcome time. You will need to script announcements according to your local needs. Adapt the welcome to fit the culture of your church family.

Welcome Script

Children walk down the church aisles holding signs they have painted. Each sign holds a different letter. The letters spell out WELCOME... in one colour. The children assemble up the front in order (every second child has their backs to the audience). A child's voiceover reads out the word. The children then turn around at the same time. In a rainbow of different colours the signs now read TO WORSHIP. The children read that in unison. The children put the words TO WORSHIP up on stands then run back to their seats. Try to use children of lots of different ages for this. Even little ones can do this if they get enough practice.

Welcomer comes up to take the mike

- Child 1** Welcome to our service this morning. Today the children of our church will be leading out in our worship time. What does it mean to worship? When we say that we worship God, what is happening? Today we will be looking at what it means to make God number one and worship Him. God likes it when we worship Him together as friends. If this is your first time worshipping with us today, we'd like to give you an especially warm welcome. Please take this opportunity to say hi to a person near you who you don't know so well... or maybe someone you haven't seen for a while. If you aren't sure what to say... try this (*child walks up to another child in the audience, shakes their hand and says*) Hello, it is nice to see you here today, why did you come to _____ to worship this morning?
- Child 2** To spend time with Jesus and the people who love him.
- Child 1** Did you remember your offering??? (*child 2 looks shocked*) Naa, just kidding!! Don't ask them that. Try - What has been the best thing about your week?
- Child 2** (*Relevant to child*)
- Child 1** Now it is your turn...remember everyone, short answers. This isn't the sermon!!

- Child 2** *Child 2 joins child 1 on the stage while people talk for 30 seconds to 1 minute.*
- Child 2** Now you have had a chance to talk with someone who God thinks is really special!
- Child 1** We have a couple of announcements (*these will be different in each church*)
- Child 2** Today our offering is for....
- Child 1** We're glad you're here to worship God together today.

Offering

Organise the children to be the Deacons this week. Maybe you could collect the offering in something different rather than use the usual offering plates. Use children for music during the offering. While the offering is being collected show pictures of families in your church having worship time together. Alternatively, show data projector pictures of the children in your church.

Item

During the offering is a good time to get a group of children assembled up the front ready to begin their item as soon as the offering is finished. You can choose from songs listed at the end of the programme or the children might prefer to share some of the songs that they are singing in Sabbath School. Adults love to hear what the children are singing in Sabbath School. Often they will have sung many of the songs themselves and will enjoy hearing them again.

Prayer

Choose a family from your church to come up and say the prayer. Each person can say a few sentences just like they might do at home. Ask them to include lots of praise for God as well as the needs of your church.

Readers Theatre/ Scripture Reading

You can combine some of the parts if you do not have enough children.

- Reader 1** So here's what I want you to do,
ALL God helping you:
Reader 1 Take your everyday, ordinary life – Your
Reader 3 sleeping,
Reader 4 eating,
Reader 5 going-to-work
Reader 2 and walking around life –
Reader 5 and place it before God as an offering.
Reader 3 Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him.
Reader 1 Don't become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking.
Reader 4 Instead, fix your attention on God.
ALL You'll be changed from the inside out.
Reader 2 Readily recognise what He wants from you,
Reader 3 and quickly respond to it.
Reader 5 Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity,
ALL God brings out the best in you,
Reader 1 He helps you become a well-formed and mature Christian to be a light to a world in darkness. *Romans 12, The Message Bible.*

Sermonette 1

What Is Worship?

What pictures come to your mind when I say the word 'worship'? For some of you it might be pictures of family worship where your mum might have called you together for a reading and prayer. For some people this may have been very good – for other people it might be memories of sitting through long readings and even longer prayers. Some people might think of coming to church when they think of 'worship'. We often call what we do on Sabbath our worship service. Some people might think of a style of music and others of singing to God in their shower. Today we are going to look at what it means to worship God.

In the dictionary the word worship means 'worth-ship' and it involves just that – giving worth or honour to someone or something. All of us are going to worship something or somebody. Today we worship famous people, houses, cars or lots of other things – we can even worship toys. Often people today end up worshipping themselves. Our hearts are made to worship something. Sadly this is often not God – when we worship things instead of God we are not only breaking a commandment but we are robbing ourselves of building a relationship with God – who loves us very dearly. We have all been created to worship something – we choose.

Worship is about all of our lives. In Romans 12, the Bible passage we heard, Paul talks about being a living sacrifice in **all** you do. The Message Bible says to worship God in your ordinary, everyday lives – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking around lives. He says that this is your spiritual act of worship.

Worship can happen in many ways: singing, prayer, being amazed at nature; along with our thoughts, actions and feelings that we express to God. It is not about something you do on Sabbath or for a short time each week – worship is about your everyday life and making space to thank and praise God in everyday situations.

In Isaiah 29:13 we are told to worship continually. In the Bible people praised God at work, at home, in jail and even in bed. Your everyday routine activities can be made into times of worship when you do it for the praise, glory and pleasure of God. Martin Luther said, 'A dairymaid can milk cows to the glory of God.' Your work becomes worship when you dedicate it to God and do it with an awareness of Him.

You can worship God at school – it doesn't mean you have to start singing in class but you can take time to praise God for friends, your lunch or the sun coming through the classroom window. You can worship at school, in your office, in a meeting, doing the dishes or mowing the lawn. We can worship God in ordinary, everyday situations. Worshipping God changes the way we live.

There are many different ways to worship. If you look through the Bible you find worship feasts – a big feast sounds like an interesting way to worship – these feasts were a bit like a party to celebrate God. In the Bible we also find people walking and leaping in worship, running and praising Him. There are times of worship with lots of loud praise and then there are times when it's very, very quiet and personal. Worship happens in lots of different ways and in lots of different places. You don't have to be a great singer or a great player to worship – just someone who loves our Great God and lets that love become part of what they are doing.

Darlene Zschech the lady who wrote the song *Shout To The Lord* said:

“Worship is not about great songs or great musicianship. It is about you, your heart and your relationship with God. It is an act of pure adoration, where above all else, in all circumstances, even without wonderful voices, instruments, latest technology, with all the highs, the lows, trials, successes – whatever is happening in our lives we will worship God, the King of Kings, my closest friend, the Saviour of our lives.” Darlene Zschech.

Each person here this morning is going to worship something or somebody. The question is not will you worship, but rather what is it that you are going to worship?

Points to include if you are writing your own sermonette

1. *Worship is more than songs or a programme.*
2. *All of us will worship something or somebody.*
3. *Worship is about a lifestyle.*
4. *Worship is about your heart as opposed to an act.*

Drama – Heartless Worship

Characters

Narrator – who reads the following script
Child
Conference President
Ministerial Director
Doctor

Props

Lots of stuffed toys set up as a congregation
Lectern
Doctor’s costume
Suits for President and Director

Setting

Boys bedroom that is transformed into a church

This is to be mimed while a child reads the following narration:

Once there was a boy who wanted to be a pastor. But as he was only five years old he put together the best congregation he knew how. All over the house he searched...in the attic, his sister’s bedroom, the old toy box in the study. He searched and searched until he had collected a fine congregation. He then began to prepare his sermon while his parishioners waited patiently.

He stood up to deliver his sermon and all their eyes were fixed on him. He began to explain to them the importance of worship and the ideals of a Christian life. Their eyes never left him, no-one fell asleep and they sat there silently...without so much as a whisper while he spoke to

them. The boy sat down after completing his sermon. He was pleased with his people, they were polite and attentive. He felt he was going to be a wonderful pastor and that his people would grow into men and women of great faith.

For several weeks he preached to his quiet and devoted congregation. After what he felt was a particularly brilliant point for which he was sure he would get a rousing amen...there was nothing but silence. It was at this point that it occurred to him that there was something wrong with his congregation.

He decided to take his concerns to the elders of the church (props up several of the toys). He began to explain to his elders what he felt was the problem with the church. They were committed to coming each week and listened intently. They always smiled, they never complained, they would never fight and would never object to any of his plans. However, he was concerned that his congregation was lacking a worshipful heart. His elders listened respectfully but were not able to make any valuable suggestions.

The next week he chose to preach a rousing sermon on the importance of living life to the max, of sharing God’s truths with others around them...to have a worshipful spirit. But again, his parishioners sat motionless and silent. He decided to call in his Conference President and Ministerial Director. They came and sat while he explained his dilemma. They suggested that perhaps he and the elders should visit each church member and talk through their spiritual growth plans. So early the next morning he began to visit each family. They sat quietly and listened as he explained the value of defining their spiritual pathways...yet none of them seemed to be that interested in changing their behaviour. In fact, they were quite stony about the whole process.

The pastor continued to preach each week to his church. But his zeal was gone and his health began to deteriorate. He decided to go see his Doctor. The Doctor gave him a full health check and examination. He explained to the doctor the problems he had been having at work and the doctor suggested he come along to the next service and have a look.

After looking over each member and checking their vital signs the doctor said:

Doctor I am afraid that your congregation will never reach their full potential. They have no heart and without heart, they are not capable of worship. In fact (holding up a doll with stuffing coming out) I would say this congregation is stuffed.

Sermonette 2

Worship Is About Your Heart

God wants us to worship from our hearts. In Isaiah 29 God complains about worship that is half-hearted. God says that the people were worshipping Him with stale prayers, ungrateful praise, empty words and man-made rituals without even thinking about their meaning. The Bible says: 'These people come near to me with their mouths and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up of rules taught by men.'

Worship is about what happens in your heart. Sometimes, like in our drama, we might call something worship, however if it is not from the heart then it is empty.

There's an old story about a man who went to church with an angel as his guide. Every seat in the building was filled, but there was something strange about the service. The piano player moved her fingers over the keys but no music came from its strings. The choir sang and their lips moved but no sound was heard. The pastor read from the Bible but the man with the angel did not hear the turning of the pages. The Lord's Prayer was recited but not a single word was heard. Turning to the angel the man said, 'I don't understand. What does all this mean? I see that a service is being held, but I hear nothing.' The angel replied, 'You hear nothing because there is nothing to be heard. You see the service as God sees it. These people honour Him with their lips. But their hearts are far from Him. Worship without the heart is not worship.'

When we worship God we are blessed, encouraged and feel much better. However, when we worship we need to remember that it is not about us - worship is about God. Sometimes adults say 'I didn't get anything out of worship today,' If you have ever said this then you have not understood what worship is all about. Worship is for God. Of course there are many good things that worshipping God does to you, however, the reason we worship is to bring glory and pleasure to God – not ourselves.

At the same time, God made us to worship, not because he needs it but because he knew we would need to worship. Worship reminds me I have a big God who has the world in control so I don't need to worry. Worship reminds me there is something much bigger than me going on. Worship stops me thinking just about myself. Worship reminds me that God, the most powerful being in the universe, loves me.

Sometimes we might not feel like worshipping, however, it is at these times we probably need to worship the most and remember we have a God who has this world in control – even if it doesn't feel that way.

Points to include if you are writing your own sermonette

1. *Worship is not about us – it's about God.*
2. *God does not desire lifeless worship.*
3. *Worship reminds us of who God is.*
4. *Worship is especially important in hard times when we might not feel like it.*

Monologue ~ Horatio G. Spafford

Child to present this monologue while the tune of "It is Well with My Soul" is played quietly in the background. If not by a musician then quietly on CD.

The song, *It Is Well*, has touched the hearts of many people over the years. It is a song that is very dear to me; you see... I wrote it. My name is Horatio Spafford and I wrote that song in 1874. It was the year that my whole world was shattered in just 30 short minutes. I was a lawyer based in Chicago but was over in Edinburgh helping Dwight Moody with a mission. I was eagerly waiting for the arrival of my wife and four children. They were coming over on the French Steamer Ville de Have. We were never completely sure what happened, but it seems there was a collision with a sailing ship and the steamer sunk... in only half an hour... nearly everyone on board was lost. Knowing that the steamer was rapidly sinking my wife had hurriedly taken our children from their berths and up on deck. She knelt down with our children and prayed. In just a few minutes the boat was gone and my wife and children were separated. A sailor in a life boat saw my wife floating in the water. He was able to rescue her. Ten days later I received a cable message from her with just two words... Saved alone. In my grief I wrote this song in memory of my dear children. That's why I wrote that my sorrow was like sea billows rolling. Not a day goes by that I don't think about them. I know that one day I will see them again in heaven. For now, I must trust that God is in control and worship Him even if I don't understand why some things happen like they do. I know I have a God who does understand and has a plan – I'll worship Him and tell Him that It is Well With My Soul. Will you sing it with me now?

When Horatio is finishing, the song leaders are to join him so that when he finishes talking they can roll straight into the song.

Song *It Is Well With My Soul*

Additional Reading

You may choose to have a single child read this or read it as a group. You could have a child read it with instrumental music and data projector pictures of nature in the background. You might want to make a video using this as the script with scenes of children from your church having fun together praising God.

96th Psalm

Sing to the Lord a brand-new song! Earth and everyone in it, sing! Sing to the Lord – worship the Lord! For the Lord is great and worth a thousand Hallelujahs... Brave, Yahweh. Everyone join in the great shout: Encore! In awe before your beauty, in awe before your might. Bring gifts and celebrate...everyone worship! Get out the message – Yahweh rules! Let's hear it from the Sky, with Earth joining in and a huge round of applause from Sea. Let Wilderness turn cartwheels, animals, come dance, put every tree of the forest in the choir – an extravaganza before the Lord as He comes (*The Message*).

Sermonette 3

God Has Feelings Too

God created us with feelings. Right now you might be feeling really happy or excited. Maybe some people might be feeling sad or hurt for some reason. We often forget that God has feelings too. He feels things even more than us.

The Bible tells us that God can feel sad, that he feels pity, sorrow, sympathy and anger as well as happiness, gladness, and satisfaction. God loves, rejoices and enjoys. Psalm 147:11 says, *"The Lord takes pleasure with those who worship Him and trust His love"*. Kids – we know that mums and dads love getting hugs from us – especially if they don't even have to ask for one – it makes their hearts very warm. Just like that, God enjoys it when we honour Him. Just like mums and dads get excited when their children first smile, step, clap or say a word - God gets excited about you. God desperately wants a friendship with you – His child.

Worship is about falling in love with God and how we show it. Sometimes older people in our church fall in love (*if the child has a much older brother or sister they may refer to them*). Right now I'm not sure why they do this but they do and people say I'll understand it more when I'm older. When a guy falls in love with a girl they say he can't stop thinking about her. He thinks about her when he is eating breakfast, going to classes or doing work. He keeps thinking and talking about all the things he loves about her. By always thinking about her he stays connected to her even though she might be far away.

It's a bit the same with worship. The apostle Paul says that when we understand how wonderful God is and just how much He has already done for us we will overflow in worship. We worship God 'because He first loved us'. Offering yourself to God is what worship is all about. In Revelation chapter 14 and verse 7 an angel reminds the church that we are to worship. He says *"Give God glory because the time has come when he will sit and judge. Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and all the springs of water"*. This angel reminds us that God is powerful, that He has got things in control and will sort things out. The next few verses remind us we can also get caught worshipping ourselves or other things apart from God. Sadly it seems most of the world gets caught worshipping itself and not God. We are told to show other people what true worship is.

Worship is responding to God with our hearts and making Him first. When you love someone, it's natural to want to let those feelings be known. You want to tell them and show them, do something for them. When you tell people how much you care – it makes you grow even closer to them. It's the same with God. Worship helps you grow closer to Him.

God also knew we would get busy and get caught worrying about lots of things like work and school. When we get busy we can forget to worship – often just at the time we really need to remember who God is. This is one of the reasons God created the Sabbath – a whole 24 hours where we can remember that God created us and deeply loves us. We can remember we are more than just people who have to get things done. We can take special time to worship Him without the distractions of the rest of the week. Making Sabbath a special time of worship will remind us of what is really important for the other six days of the week.

Psalm 71 says, *"I will praise you with music, telling of your faithfulness to all your promises, I will sing your praises for redeeming me. I will talk to others all day long about your justice and your goodness."* In Psalm 159, David said: *"I will sing about your strength; every morning I will sing*

aloud of your constant love. You have been a refuge for me, a shelter in my time of trouble. I will praise you, the God who loves me."

Worship is all about telling God that we love Him.

Points to include if you are writing your own sermonette

1. *God has feelings.*
2. *Worship overflows from a relationship with God.*
3. *Worship is about telling God we love Him.*
4. *The Sabbath is a special time for worship and should shape our worship for the other six days.*

Congregational Song

Children's leaders to explain the key tags and thank children for their work.

Closing prayer Child

Postlude music from children who play instruments in your church.

End of Programme Give Away (see appendix 2)

Key Tags

The focus of this programme is on Worship and the importance of living a Romans 12 life. These key tags will serve as a reminder that God wants us to worship Him. Each time they see the keytag they will be prompted to spend a moment worshipping our Creator...at the lights, while in a waiting room, as they walk out to the car.

The Romans 12 magnet/wall hanging is optional. We would strongly suggest that this chapter be committed to memory to remind you of the importance of living a life in Christ. These magnets or wall hangings should be placed where they can be read regularly.

Song List

PLAY TODAY

Produced by Lyell Heise, Valmai Hill and the Institute of Worship, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Avondale College and SPD.

Worthy Is the Lamb	Book 1
Above All	Book 1
How Great Thou Art	Book 3

KIDSOURCE

Compiled by Cpt. Alan Price, CA in 1999 Published by Kevin Mayhew Ltd Buxhall, Suffolk.

Father We Adore You	57
Lord I Lift Your Name On High	235
Open Our Eyes Lord	278

THE SOURCE

Compiled by Graham Kendrick in 1989 Published by Kevin Mayhew Ltd Rattlesden, Suffolk.

As The Deer	28
Bless the Lord	56
God's Not Dead	133
How Deep the Father's Love For Us	185

THE SOURCE 2

Compiled by Graham Kendrick in 2001 Published by Kevin Mayhew Ltd Buxhall, Suffolk.

Beautiful Lord, Wonderful Saviour	640
O God You Are My God	906

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH HYMNAL, Published by Review and Herald, 1985.

How Great Thou Art	86
Immortal Invisible God Only Wise	21
My Hope Is Built	522

MY FRIEND JESUS – CD

Composed by Janine Max in 2000, Published by maxiPraise, Cooranbong NSW.

The Lord's Prayer

LIVE IT – CD

Composed by Janine Max in 2004, Published by maxiPraise, Cooranbong NSW.

Child of Grace

REACH FOR JESUS – CD

Composed by Kimberly Houliston, Published by Houlico.

Sing His Praise

JUST JESUS – CD

Composed by Kimberly Houliston, Published by Houlico.

Kings Kids

Background Reading For Leaders

This section provides a short study on the purpose of worship. It is provided here with a view to having you become immersed in the value and why this is such an important concept to share. As you think through the concept you might generate other ideas that allow you to present this purpose even more clearly in your context.

Making Worship Real

Between this day and your last you will worship something or somebody. The question is not will you worship, but rather what is it that you are going to worship?

Until you become a worshipper of the One who is worthy of worship, the One who created you and called you into being, you will never experience the spiritual depth and vitality that you were designed for. *"In fact, of all the spiritual investments that can be made, this may be the deepest, most penetrating, personal, life-changing investment of all. Yet it may also be the one people understand the least – and certainly do the least. As Chuck Swindoll once put it, our tendency is to worship our work, work at our play and play at our worship. But playing at worship will cause us to miss out on all that worship can bring to our lives, beginning with its role of helping us order our lives around God."* (James Emery White, You Can Experience A Spiritual Life).

We often forget that God has emotions too. He feels things very deeply. The Bible tells us that God grieves, feels compassion, pity, sorrow, sympathy and anger as well as happiness, gladness, and satisfaction. God loves, delights, gets pleasure, rejoices and enjoys. Psalm 147:11 says, *"The Lord takes pleasure with those who worship Him and trust His love"*. Just like a parent loves the feel of their child's unsolicited tight hug, God takes pleasure when we honour Him.

What Is Worship?

"Anthropologists have noted that worship is a universal urge, hard-wired by God into the very fibre of our being – an inbuilt need to connect with God. Worship is as natural as eating or breathing. If we fail to worship God, we always find a substitute, even if it ends up being ourselves." (Rick Warren). We either worship God or we worship creation, there is no middle ground. We have all been created to worship something – we choose. It is not just a movement of the mind, but a rich and complex action, which consumes our very nature. It affects the way we live life.

We were made for worship and our hearts are restless until they have found the object of worship that we were created to honour. (Dallas Willard). The word worship literally means 'worth-ship' and it involves just that – giving worth or honour to someone or something.

Worship Is Not For Your Benefit

We are blessed and encouraged through worshipping God. However, when we worship our goal is to bring pleasure to God, not ourselves. If you have ever said, 'I didn't get anything out of worship today,' you have misunderstood worship. Worship is for God. Of course there are many benefits to Worship, however our motive is to bring glory and pleasure to our Creator, not to 'get something out of it'.

Worship Is All About Falling In Love With Jesus

When the very core of your being is found to be loving Him, to be lost in Him, it isn't about

the songs, it isn't about how big the band is or how big the choir is. All of these are wonderful expressions of worship, but they are not the essence of it. The essence of worship is when your heart and soul, all that is within you, adores and connects with the Spirit of God. In fact, regardless of how magnificent the musical moments are, unless your heart is fully engaged in the worship being expressed it is still only music. The pure song of the heart that yearns for more of God and less of self, is the music that delights the heart of God (Darlene Zschech).

Why Does God Desire Worship?

Have you ever wondered why God insists on being worshipped? Does He really need to have a planet full of creatures spending vast amounts of time and effort dreaming up ways to tell Him how great He is? Doesn't He already know that?

Worship is not about filling God's unmet ego needs. God made us so that when we experience something transcendently great, we have a need to praise it. We are to worship God, not because His ego needs it, but because without worship, our experience and enjoyment of God are not complete. We worship God not so much because He needs it, but because we do.

"I need to worship because without it I can forget that I have a Big God beside me and live in fear. I need to worship because without it I can forget His calling and begin to live in a spirit of self-preoccupation. I need to worship because without it I lose a sense of wonder and gratitude and plod through life with blinders on. I need to worship because my natural tendency is toward self-reliance and stubborn independence."

John Ortberg, *If You Want To Walk On Water*.

An Expression of a Relationship

When you love someone, it's natural to want to let those feelings be known. You want to tell them and show them, do something for them. Worship is one of the most personal, sincere, authentic ways to respond to God relationally. When you articulate your feelings it deepens your relationship with God. It is the same in a marriage – when you tell your spouse how you feel about him/her, how much you care for them, how important they are and that you love them, it can't help but deepen the relationship.

The Bible presents worship in expressive terms. Psalm 71 says, *"I will praise you with music, telling of your faithfulness to all your promises, I will sing your praises for redeeming me. I will talk to others all day long about your justice and your goodness."* In Psalm 159, David said: *"will sing about your strength; every morning I will sing aloud of your constant love. You have been a refuge for me, a shelter in my time of trouble. I will praise you, the God who loves me."*

Many people have a hard time expressing their feelings to other people, much less God. But even the most awkward attempts at expressing that love matter.

The Centrality of Christ

For us, it comes down to the place Christ plays in our life experiences, expectations and beliefs with which we govern our life decisions. Is Christ really at the centre? Paul said, *"I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"* (1 Cor 2:2). Ellen White reminds us that the *"sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster."* (Sons and Daughters of God, p. 221). *"Christ crucified – talk it, pray it, sing*

it and it will break and win hearts. This is the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ. This is what worship is all about." (Testimonies VI, p.67).

In Spirit and Truth

Worship is vital to our spiritual lives in that it helps us to encounter and experience God. No one wants dead, lifeless ritual. We don't want dried-out dogma. We don't want meaningless symbols and practices. We want to engage God, to experience God. God wants that for us too and He's designed a way for it to happen – worship.

"God seeks worshippers from the heart, rather than worship consisting essentially of ritual forms conducted at some particular place." (SDA Commentary).

In Spirit

Worshipping in Spirit is to do so in all sincerity, being genuine and real – applying truth to the heart. Sometimes we can be very head oriented and not let the implications travel the worlds longest 50cm, between the head and the heart. Micah points out this distinction in chapter 6:7-8. Jesus said, *"It's not just whom you worship that matters, but how you worship"*.

God is pleased when our worship is authentic. God looks past our words to see the attitude of our hearts. While the heart is about emotions, God is not seeking showmanship or phoniness in worship. He wants your honest, real love.

God wants you to worship sincerely, however sincerity alone is not enough – you can be sincerely wrong... That's why both spirit and truth are required. God-pleasing worship is both deeply emotional and deeply doctrinal.

In Truth

When worship is not from the heart it is false. Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices to God. However, Abel's was what God asked for, while Cain's was what suited him. Both worshipped, however one of the brothers worshipped out of surrender and the right attitude while the other came from self. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for the way tradition, pride and their own comfort and greed had taken over from genuine worship. Throughout Daniel and Revelation we see the big issue in the end-times being true and false worship. It's not about if you are worshipping or not but what attitude you come to worship with. When we read about modern Babylon, it still worships, but does so in a false 'counterfeit' way, choosing self over God. You and I can drift into this type of worship very easily when we substitute what the world tells us is important over God.

God is pleased when our worship is accurate. It's not about us creating our own comfortable or politically correct image of God and worshipping that. Worship must be based on the truths of scripture. *"To worship in truth means doing so with the highest faculty of the mind"*, Ellen White. When we worship God we worship God as He is revealed in the Bible - not some false idea of God or some substitute for God. There are many other objects you could worship including a distorted view of God or even a doctrine, but that wouldn't be the worship you were created for, much less a worship that would do anything for your life.

The Sabbath, Rest and Perspective

The Sabbath reminds us that we worship God's work, not ours, and that we rest in God's grace. The first Sabbath was about resting in what God had done – man was only created on the

Friday. The Sabbath then is the perfect symbol of grace.

Following creation God wasn't exhausted but rather He was putting in place an important rhythm he knew we needed if we were going to live with purpose. Cycles of work and rest, production and gratitude, activity and reflection are all guarded against by the Sabbath. To ignore this rhythm is just plain toxic to our souls and leaves us with a reduced capacity to care for people, love to the right degree and grow spiritually. We become shallow, self-absorbed people who might be achieving big goals but for no eternal purpose.

God's purpose for me is that I worship Him. Worshipping God on the Sabbath provides me with a sense of connectedness both with God and with those about me. The Sabbath brings my world into balance helping me to remember that God is first, people are next and that although I am last, I am of immense value because God desires my worship and a relationship with me. I am His creation and in Christ He redeemed. He made me and redeemed me to worship Him.

God knew that by ourselves we would drift into society's self oriented traps. We will only experience life to the full when we take the opportunity God created for us to revive, recalibrate and renew around God's purposes. That's what the Sabbath is all about.