

CALL TO WORSHIP

*Read aloud together. As a group, read aloud the **emphasized** phrases.*

God calls us to worship, and we come;
some with laughter and songs of joy.

God calls us to worship, and we come;
some from a sense of obligation or habit.

God calls us to worship, and we come;
some with hearts heavy with grief.

God calls us to worship, and we come;
some with distraction or exhaustion.

God calls us to worship, and we come;
some with eagerness and enthusiasm.

God calls us to worship, and we come;
some with stress, loneliness, or depression.

As God's dearly loved children we bring our whole selves into his presence;
All our joy and pain, weakness and hope finds its place in his grace and rest.
God has called and we will listen. Amen.

Source: adapted from *The Worship Source Book* 2nd ed. (pg 54)

SINGING TOGETHER

Sing, listen and receive together with contemplation and worship.

Yesterday, Today, and Forever	(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjOLDaSfIHQ)
You are my King	(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKJnxA_3AY8)
Goodness of God	(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4)
Be Still and Know	

A PRAYER FOR PREPARING TO READ THE BIBLE TOGETHER

*Pray this together. As a group, read aloud the **emphasized** phrases.*

Open our eyes, O God:
That we may behold wondrous things out of your written word.

Open our ears, O God:
That we may hear what you speak to those who turn to you in their hearts.

Open our minds, O God:
That we may understand what it means to trust you and to learn of your ways.

Open our hearts, O God:
That we may grasp the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ.

Open our mouths, O God:
That we may proclaim the goodness of Jesus and speak of him boldly.

Source: adapted from *The Worship Source Book* 2nd ed. (pg 144)

READING THE BIBLE TOGETHER

Read a loud and receive Scripture together. Pause briefly after each passage to allow for prayerful personal reflection and any public response, such as an observation or question, an expression of gratitude, a reflection of encouragement or hope, etc. Share how this passage resonates with you, how it intersects with your story or illuminates your life, how it shapes your prayers. A few guiding questions have been listed below each passage.

Psalm 48

- ¹ Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.
² Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth,
like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.
³ God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.
⁴ When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together,
⁵ they saw her and were astounded; they fled in terror.
⁶ Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labor.
⁷ You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind.
⁸ As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD Almighty,
in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever.
⁹ Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.
¹⁰ Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with righteousness.
¹¹ Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments.
¹² Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers,
¹³ consider well her ramparts, view her citadels,
that you may tell of them to the next generation.
¹⁴ For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

- *Where do you feel safe and secure? Where do you feel God's presence and protection?*
- *In what ways have you seen or experienced God's unfailing love? Have you ever felt unloved by God?*
- *How has God been your guide in life? How is he guiding you now?*

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. ² In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

³ When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

⁴ David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. ⁵ In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

⁹ David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces inward. ¹⁰ And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

- *How have you seen God's blessings in your life? What effect has being with God had on your life?*
- *Are you prone to assume that a "blessed life" means God is pleased with you and conversely, hardship means God isn't please with you, has abandoned you? Why is that?*

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. ³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. ⁵ I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶ Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, ⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

a. Exodus 16:18

- *When was a time you experienced God’s grace in your weakness? How has God’s power showed up when you needed it the most?*
- *Can you think of a time when a prayer was answered in a way that you didn’t expect? How did that go?*
- *What might God be saying or doing in the hardships that we are facing as individuals and as a church?*

Mark 6:1-13

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

⁸ These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

- *How can you today demonstrate faith in Jesus? What lingering questions do you have about Jesus?*
- *Can you think of a time when you rejected Jesus, his presence, his assistance, etc? Has anyone rejected you because you were a Christ follower? What was that like?*
- *Where or to whom might God be sending you? How is God preparing you to join him in his work?*

PRAYERFUL SILENCE AND PRAYING TOGETHER

In quietness turn what was shared into prayer. Take a moment or two of silence to contemplate, to express gratitude for God’s provisions, to intercede for matters shared, to worship. As you are inwardly prompted, pray aloud with your group. Allow the Scripture read to shape and inform your prayers. Intercede for our church family: our needs, questions, burdens, pains, and obstacles.

COMMUNAL PRAYER

*Pray this together. As a group, read aloud the **emphasized** phrases.*

God of power, Lord of might,
In Jesus you lowered yourself to show us a better way.
Hear our prayers; we want to follow your way.

We confess that we often boast about our achievements
and the experiences that elevate us above others.
**Forgive us the times we put the spotlight on ourselves,
rather than on you, the giver of all gifts and sustainer of all life.**

We confess that sometimes we are infatuated with power,
craving the authority and ability to do great things and get ahead in life.
**Show us instead how we can participate in your kingdom work,
choosing to build others up rather than building something for ourselves.**

We confess that we tend to rely only on ourselves,
depending on our own strength, resources, and ingenuity.
**Teach us to rely on you, to trust you in all circumstances,
to follow you on whatever path you set before us.**

Lastly, we confess that we frequently view weakness with disdain
and vulnerability as something to be avoided.
**Help us to see these circumstances as portals of grace,
to discover your presence in the midst of life's hardships.**
Amen.

Source: Andrew Haak

BENEDICTION

*Read aloud together in closing. As a group, read aloud the **emphasized** phrases.*

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father,
who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,
encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.
Amen.

SENDING SONG

As we close our time, you are invited to contemplatively receive this song or gather with someone for prayer.

Pat Barrett – Build My Life (www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZW4_8_zCBE)