

Worship is more than music and Christian music is much more than worship!

When referring to our honouring of the Lord in various ways, we must be careful not to narrow down the meaning of Biblical concepts, by holding on to only one meaning and application it has, and losing many of the other facets of such an idea in the Scriptures.

If we, for example, use the word “worship” as a synonym for “singing to the Lord”, we may forget about all the other ways in which we are to worship God, such as when we pray, when we bring offerings, when we humbly listen to him and his word, yes, when we celebrate his greatness and goodness in various ways. In the Bible we find that also dancing, bringing sacrifices, and honouring Gods commandments, amongst other things, are as much considered worship, as singing, making music and prayer.

On the other hand there also is a risk to narrow our music and singing ministry down to a concept that may cause us to forget that apart from expressing our reverence for God, singing to the Lord should also express thanksgiving and the sheer joy of salvation and for being in his presence. Singing is sometimes the only way in which we manage to petition God for our deepest needs! Singing often is the only way in which we are able to express our emotions borne of faith, gratitude and dependence on God!

In serving God, worship, praise, thanksgiving and singing are but a few activities through which we acknowledge the LORD as the only true God and express our complete and deep-seated dependence, love and respect for him.

***Singing to the Lord often is worship, but should be a lot more than worship!
Worshipping God often entails singing, but is much, much more than only prayerful singing!***

What is Christian worship then?

It is **our adoration for God** that brings us to worship!

Revering, respecting, honouring, rendering homage to God, are some of the words we use when we try to explain to others what we do when we worship God.

Worshipping God is an integral part of prayer, it is one of the reasons for our music ministry, it is the reason why we praise his Name, it is the purpose for coming together when we meet on Sundays (and other occasions) and the only purpose and goal for our lives as Christians.

Only God may be worshipped. Worship was refused by Peter (Acts 10:25,26) and by an angel (Rev. 22:8,9). In Revelation 19:10, when the apostle John saw an angel, he fell at his feet to worship him. But the angel said to him, “See you do it not: I am your fellow-servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: **worship God.**”

Jesus, being the eternal Son of God, being God, accepted the worship of his followers, particularly after his resurrection, for example in Matt 28:17 - “When they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted”.

To worship only God is one of the Ten Commandments. Not only may we not worship anything else or any other person but God, but we are commanded by God to bring him homage, honour and to revere him, because he is our God!

What do we do when we Praise God?

Praise is different from worship in the sense that **gratitude and thanksgiving** for Gods goodness, mercies and graceful gifts to us cause us to bring him praise!

The Bible says...

"Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, **for He is good!** For His mercy endures forever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? Who can declare all His praise?" Psalm 106:1-2

The Bible provides a record of many people thanking the Lord with praise...

- King Solomon expressed gratitude for Divine faithfulness and goodness - 1 Kings 8:14-21
- Thanking God for food - Deuteronomy 8:10, John 6:11
- King David thanked God after winning a battle - 2 Samuel 22:1-51, Psalm 98:1
- "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, *abounding in it with thanksgiving.*" Colossians 2:6-7
- Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, *in everything give thanks*; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- "Enter his gates *with thanksgiving and his courts with praise*; give thanks to him and praise his name." Psalm 100:4
- People were rebuked for not thanking God for their harvest, see Jeremiah 5:24-25
- If people withheld their praise to God, the stones would have cried out. See Luke 19:37-40
- ...and many others

Faith and thanksgiving are close friends. If you have faith in God, you will be thankful because you know his loving hand is upon you, even though you are in a lion's den. That will give you a deep sense of joy, and joy is the barometer of the depth of faith you have in God.

We have so much to be thankful for. God has given us "exceeding great and precious promises" that are "more to be desired than gold." Do yourself a big favour and believe those promises, thank God continually for them, and "let your joy be full." Praise God for all his great gifts that come from his kindness, mercy, grace, love, goodness, salvation and deliverance. Praise him through words of prayer, songs of joy, acts of obedience, yes, with a life submitted to his authority, seeking the coming of his kingdom and acknowledging his dominion over all!

What is Prayer?

Prayer is conversation with God; the intercourse of the soul with God, not in contemplation or meditation, but according to everything the Bible says about prayer, in direct address to him.

Prayer may be oral, mental, thinking, talking or singing, occasional or constant, spontaneous or formal and prepared. It is "beseeching the Lord" (Ex. 32:11); "pouring out the soul before the Lord" (1 Sam. 1:15); "praying and crying to heaven" (2 Chr. 32:20); "seeking unto God and making supplication" (Job 8:5); "drawing near to God" (Ps. 73:28); "bowing the knees" (Eph. 3:14).

Prayer entails worship, praise, begging, honouring, petitioning and all the other thoughts, needs and desires we want to and have to express before the Lord.

Prayer presupposes a belief in the personality of God, his ability and willingness to communicate with us, his personal control of all things and of all his creatures and all their actions.

Acceptable prayer must be sincere (Hebrews 10:22), offered with faith, reverence and godly fear, with a humble sense of our own insignificance as creatures and of our own unworthiness as sinners, with earnest and humble authenticity and with unhesitating submission to his divine will.

Prayer must be offered in the faith that God, in Jesus Christ, is the hearer and answerer of prayer, and that he will fulfil his word, "Ask, and ye shall receive" (Matt. 7:7,8; 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 14:13,14). "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Phil. 4:6

Prayer is offered in the name of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:18; 5:20; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:5).

And why should we be singing to the Lord?

In the same way we are commanded to pray, to bring homage to God in all we do and to thank him for everything he has done for us, we are also taught in the Bible that we should sing to bring him glory, worship, praise and asking him for his blessings!

Singing can be worshipping God, it can be praise and thanksgiving, it can be asking and petitioning him for his blessings and gifts, it can be an expression of our love and it certainly is communication, very intimate and most of the time emotional communication, with God!!

The Psalms particularly call upon us to sing praises to God, to sing with understanding, and to make our singing glorious, beautiful, heartfelt and filled with worship and praise. The following words from the Psalms are but a few that charge us to sing to the Lord: Psalm 7:17, 47:7, 66:2, 66:4, 9:2, 27:6, 28:7, 57:9, 61:8, 63:7, 68:4, 32, 69:30, 71:22-23, 92:1, 96:2, 101:1, 104:33, 105:2, 135:3, 146:2.

Singing to the Lord is much more than singing in church or when Christians meet to bring honour to God. We should "always" be singing to the Lord and Psalm 149: 5 urges us to even sing for joy in bed.

"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving!" Psalm 69:30.

Psalm 150 summarises our Lord's expectation to be honoured, revered, praised and worshipped through music and song, as expressed in the Book of Psalms:

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

Praise Him for His mighty acts;

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp!

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;

Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

Hallelujah!