

# The Scope of Worship

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'Worship is to quicken the conscience by the Holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God' - William Temple

Worship is God and human beings relating properly, as it was meant to be.

It's analogous to when the old words of the marriage service are said '*with my body I thee worship*'. When husband and wife say to one another 'with my body I thee worship', it's an expression of man and woman relating together properly, also as it was meant to be, with reverent and exclusive and delightful intimacy.

At the heart of worship, of getting broken humans to relate to a holy God has always been sacrifice. That sacrifice, offered to God in the Old Testament ritual, was a serious, costly blessing; and sacrifice and feasting went together.

In the New Testament, God has provided the sacrifice, His Son, and when we get together to worship, we remember His sacrifice at the heart of it all, and our sacrifice is ourselves, a sacrifice of joyful self giving, a sacrifice of praise

Romans 12 v 1 '*Therefore I urge you brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.*'

Hebrews 13 v 13, '*Through Jesus therefore let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*'

Worship is the hallmark of the people of God. Worship together is the overflow of the work of the Spirit amongst the people of God.

So let our worship be linked with our lifestyle. Let our worship be with expressions of praise and thanks. Let our worship be led by the Holy Spirit. Let our worship be an intimate encounter with God where as we speak to Him and offer Him our lives we are aware of Him speaking to us, and we find we are changed. Let our worship be a discipline of life, with others to give us the benefits William Temple described, and to keep us a Holy people!

## Feasting & Fasting

The continuum of worship goes through feasting and fasting, celebration and longing. Theologically it fits with our world view of the 'now and not yet' of the kingdom of God. It fits too with Jesus comment on himself and John the Baptist Luke 7 v 31 onwards. It fits with the Psalter, which for centuries has been the worship source for God's people. Our experience and our theology and our biblical models demand that our worship repertoire embrace this continuum.

*c.f. Feasts and fasts of Israel*

*psalm 69, psalm 39, psalm 38; or psalm 107; 148,9 lament 137*