

Participant Guide

(In preparation for NCGroups on January 22th)

Series: Why Worship?

Recap: Session One (January 1-8, 2023): The Necessity of Worship

Our key passage for this session was Revelation 4-5. This passage pulls back the veil of heaven and reveals to us God's heavenly throne room. Every day, all day long, God is being worshipped! Regularly gathering as a church to worship is not only important to us – it is necessary. At Neighborhood Church, our NCGather events is where we gather to worship corporately. The goal with this type of worship service is to strive to bring the congregation to the throne room of God (as much as possible), and to remind us that God is sovereign over all, and worthy of our praise, trust, and obedience. For Neighborhood Church, the NCGather is to be like a half-time or intermission. The hope is that this time together, and all that we do (sing, pray, partake of the Lord's Supper, listen to the preaching of God's Word), will renew and ready us for the week ahead and give us a break from the everyday routine of life and turn our attention to Christ.

Recap: Session Two (January 15-22): Worship in the Day to Day

During this session topic, our focus turns away from NCGather events to NCGroups. Our key passage is Acts 2:42-47, which is a summary of the day-to-day worship patterns of the very first Christians. We hope to take what we can from this Bible passage and apply it practically to our lives. Our NCGroups are designed with this passage in mind. NCGroups are smaller in number, and they take place in living rooms to create an environment in which we can worship in more practical ways and accomplish our goal of making strong disciples. We accomplish this as we circle together to discuss God's Word, ask questions, and share insights. Within this environment, relationships can grow and be strengthened, enabling us to support each other well.

Summary of Last Sunday's Sermon (January 15th):

Title: Worship in the Day to Day

Main Idea: Attributes of a Healthy Church

Main Point: A Healthy Church is marked by...

- Learning, praying, worship, partnering, and growing

Other Details:

- Principles from this passage apply directly to the goal and structure of NC Groups
- Prayer/ Goal/ Challenge for Neighborhood Church in 2023
 - Our goal is to see at least one person become a follower of Jesus Christ by our evangelistic efforts, be baptized at a Neighborhood Church baptismal service, participate faithfully at Neighborhood Church events, and serve in some aspect of Neighborhood Church life. If by December 31, 2023, we have not seen this take place, We do not believe we are on track with God's mission and we will stop Neighborhood Church as a church and become faithful members of other local congregations.

Tasks to complete in preparation for NCGroups on Sunday, January 22

1. Read and re-read Acts 2: 42-47, and answer the following questions:

- What do this first Christians value?
- How often did they meet together?
- What are the action verbs in these verses?

2. Prepared to discuss these questions at NCGroup on January 22

- From this passage, what qualities or characteristics that describe the early church are most interesting to you, and what are the most intimidating to you?
- If you were to describe NCGroups and the purpose, would it be in align with how this passage describes the early church?
- What is the value of meeting in smaller groups and in a home and what are challenges that come with this type of gathering?
- What are ways or mindsets that we must adopt to overcome some of these challenges?
- How have you seen NCGroups benefit you or your family?

3. In this series we have talked about the value of both corporate worship (NC Gather) and worshipping in smaller groups (NC Groups). For us to get the most impact from our time together, whether in Gathers or Groups, our hearts must first be set on the Lord in personal worship. We are made to worship, but as we live in the day-to-day, and week to week, we do not always worship the right thing. By nature, we are idol factories and battle with keeping the “good things” in our lives from becoming “god things”. Identifying potential idols in our personal lives is a crucial part of our walk with the Lord and will only lead to stronger worship both personally, corporately, and in groups. This week, process these questions and prayerfully evaluate yourself, and see if the Lord brings anything to mind that you need to confess and repent of as we struggle to worship well the One who is holy and worthy of everything:

1. The Love Test:

- Where does your mind go when it is free?
- What do you spend your money on?
- What do you get excited about?
 - Our answer to these questions is what we love and worship and could reveal a possible idol. Verses to consider: Deuteronomy 10:12; Joshua 23:11, 1 John 2:5; 2 John 1:6

2. The Trust Test:

- Where does your heart go when you experience trouble or problems?
 - Some answer this question with doing something to distract them from reality or feed an addiction (shopping, drugs, pornography).
 - Some answer with isolation that leads to depression or inactivity, that results in living a life without clear direction and purpose
- Where do you find your security?
 - Some will answer jobs, family, a house, retirement plan, insurance policy, science or medicine
- Our answer to these questions is what we value and worship. Trusting God with your life and everything that comes along with it is an act of surrender and worship.
 - Verses to consider: Isaiah 26:3; Psalm 9:10; Psalm 37:4-5, Proverbs 3:5-6

3. Significance Test:

- What it in our lives tells us that we are significant and valuable?
 - Some answers will include family and friends, positive self-image, accomplishments, and status
 - What or whom we depend on to give us value and purpose, apart from God, could be a possible idol in our life. Verses to consider: Romans 8:16; Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 2:20;

4. The Negative Emotion Test

- What makes you angry? What are you afraid of? What worries you?
 - These emotions can shed light on potential idols in your life.
 - When you are “squeezed” through frustrating situations or overwhelming circumstances, what emotions are the first to show themselves? If anger, worry, or fear are the first to show up, ask the Lord to show you the truth behind these emotions and if there are idols in your life that are leading you to this point.