

FUTURE BUILDERS

Discussion Notes

FROM WALL TO WORSHIP

Worship can be tricky to define and although we talk about it a lot we may not actually know what 'worship' means. Matt defined worship as 'a response to God that moves from the inside of us to the outside.'

- What does this definition mean to you? Is this how you think about 'worship'?
- There are many ways this response to God reaches the outside. Matt mentioned a few; laughter, hard work, marching for justice. Is there a form of worship that personally helps you connect with God?

Read Nehemiah 8 together, asking afterwards if anything from the passage stood out to people.

When we worship: we're united

Matt explained that when we worship together we are united. In Nehemiah, we see that 'all the people came together as one in the square before the water gate.'

- Have you experienced a sense of unity in worship?
- What does this look like?
- Why is this unity in worship important? How can it be powerful?
- How can we make sure we stay united in worship?

When we worship: we dwell in truth

Next we read that 'they told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel.' When we worship, we are reminding each other of the truth about God and ourselves.

- What difference can dwelling in truth in worship make to us in day to day life?
- What challenges are there for us here?

When we worship: we welcome everyone

Nehemiah 8:2 says, "So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand." The text is clear that there was no separation between the men and women, in fact all who were able to understand were included. This is radically different to the worship of the day where how close you could come to God's dwelling place in worship was determined by your standing in society, i.e. if you are a women, or 'unclean' etc.

- Have you ever considered the importance of making sure that worship is a welcoming place for everyone?
- How can we make sure our worship is for everyone? What are the challenges of this?

When we worship: we prioritise God

Worshipping God when things are tough is not easy. However, we see in the story of Nehemiah the importance of worshipping in all situations. When we do this we prioritise God over ourselves and our circumstances.

- How do we worship God when we don't feel like it? What does this actually look like? Does anyone have tips for this?
- Have you had a positive experience of this?
- Matt mentioned Psalm 51 where David says God values a broken heart. Read Psalm 51:10-17 together and reflect on what this can teach us about worshipping in times of pain.

When we worship: we engage our bodies

Finally, we read "Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, 'Amen! Amen!' Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." We see that the Israelites worshipped with their bodies, just as we can too. Matt explained that this is often powerful because allows us to worship God in a way that words can't express.

- What do you think when you see people responding with their bodies in worship? Is it distracting, off-putting or is it something that inspires you to worship?
- Have you got experiences of when worshipping with your body has allowed you to worship God with greater depth than just using your voice?