



Setting the scene...

With the start of a New Year come fresh starts and new beginnings, and what better time to get back to basics with an aspect of discipleship that is central to who we are as Christians, namely worshipping our Heavenly Father. A loving Father who longs to live more closely with us, and as St Paul once wrote: 'is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen' (Ephesians 3:20).

And when it comes to our services and the worship gatherings we offer up in St Mary's, this is why we hold a wide range of services, from the more traditional to the more contemporary, because we want everyone to feel able to worship our Heavenly Father and know more of the many blessings he wants to pour out upon us.

At the start of another year, I wonder what your hopes and dreams are? Mindful of missionary

William Carey's words, 'Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God' may we all be blessed in this year as we worship God the Father, through Jesus our Lord, and in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Week One: Going Deeper in Worship: Our Sunday Offering

What is worship? Richard Foster says, "worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father".

What does this look like in our Sunday services? We sing, pray, share in bread & wine, read Scripture; these are all participatory tools that help us in our worship response. They are acts of worship that glorify God and help us to encounter him.

In Leviticus 1 we see how the Israelites worship. They come to the tent of meeting with an animal that is "without defect" (v3+10) and offer it to God. They bring their best and it is "pleasing to the Lord" (v9+13+17).

Similarly, and in the light of what Jesus did for us on the cross, when we come to church and engage in worship, we are bringing ourselves as an offering (Rom 12:1). We are not giving a half-hearted measure, but the best we can each week. [Even if that means just showing up - that's Ok too!]

The widow in Mark 12:41-44 brings a small offering, she "put in everything - all she had" (v.44). By comparison, the rich people were making a show of

their worship; their offering was not authentic, nor was it God-glorifying. They had their priorities wrong.

A focus on how we worship is to lose sight of who we worship. Matt Redman says we worship "for the audience of one". Do not put-up barriers to hinder you in your worship. Jesus has removed these obstacles, enabling us to encounter him.

Questions to consider personally or in your Life Group:

1. What does worship mean to you?
2. What can distract you from engaging in worship on a Sunday?
3. Could part of your worship be serving in our Sunday worship?

Here are some ideas: welcoming people at the door, pouring tea/coffee, being part of the prayer team, helping at Kids' Church, adjusting the microphone levels or on-screen content.





Time to talk...

If this sermon series raises questions for you, David, Andrew and Sue would be only too pleased to take the time to explore the themes further with you.



Life groups have an important part to play in our church community. Meeting together in small groups to pray and study God's word supports Christian growth, friendship and mission.

If you would like to join a Life Group or are interested in hosting a new group, please speak to Claire Barbary: clairebarbary@hotmail.com.

New Year Sermon Series 2024

Worship

January 7 with Tim Horton

Going Deeper in Worship: Our Sunday Offering

Readings: Leviticus 1:1-17

Mark 12:41-44

January 14 with Alex Rees

Wholehearted, whole life Worship

Readings: Psalm 23: 1-6

Acts 2: 42-47

January 21 with Chris Stoddard

Yesterday, Today and Forever – worshipping in Spirit and Truth

Readings: Psalm 150: 1-6

John 4: 1-26

January 28 with Jo Williams

Living sacrificial lives of Worship

Readings: 1 Sam 1: 1-18

Romans 12: 1-2

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Sermon Series

Worship

**Week 1: Going Deeper in
Worship: Our Sunday
Offering**

January 7 2024