



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 Two: Going Deeper in Worship: Our Sunday Offering

Worship can be a visible sign to others of the overflowing of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost we see amazing signs and wonders, and hearts from all cultures are compelled to respond. For the Early Church, worship included all aspects of life - decisions about where they spent their time, how they spent their money, who they chose to eat with - all become aspects of worship. Praising God was a response to what God had recently done for them, and it was incredibly attractive.

Spending time in worship can also be intensely personal. Coming into a time of personal worship is an active choice to rest with God, to abide in his presence, to be refreshed and the Psalms can provide the way into this. Sometimes worship can be a real decision - when times are difficult and we 'walk through the darkest valley' our act of worship is an act of obedience and sacrifice. God sees our pain and meets us there.

In our church today we talk about 'worship leaders' and 'times of worship' and 'common worship'. We have a language that implies part of being Church is engaging in worship. Music and worship have a mysterious symbiotic relationship and we talk about styles of worship as if we are tuning in to our favourite radio

station, choosing our favourite version of instrumentation. I wonder sometimes whether we come to Church to 'consume' or 'bring' worship.

King David, a harp player and lyricist, was described as being "a man after God's own heart". Can whole-hearted worship permeate our whole lives?

Questions to consider personally or in your Life Group:

1. Recall some experiences (good and bad if possible) where you have experienced different styles of worship. When it comes to worship what are our consumer tastes?
2. How do we approach worship? What hopes, concerns, expectations do we bring? Is this different when we come to meet with God in church and alone?
3. God describes David as "a man after his own heart" (1 Sam 13:14, Acts 13:22). What do you think he meant by this? Does it matter that David is also known to be a flawed person?
4. Is the Acts 2 church a model for St Mary's Church? In what ways should we reflect it, and what ways should we not?



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

Contact us:

St Mary's Parish Office

Tel: 01844 273300

Email:

parishoffice@stmarysrisborough.org.uk

Website:

www.stmarysrisborough.org.uk



Sermon Series

Worship

**Week 2: Wholehearted,
whole life Worship**

January 14 2024