

Encountering God Series Bible Study – No 3

General Introduction to Series

- A recent visitor to the church said they didn't feel as if people were engaging in worship. What do you think they meant by this? Do you agree? What does 'engaging in worship look like?
- The series is about encountering God in our worship together – what is needed if we are to encounter God as we gather together?

Session 3 – Praise!

- Listen to [Psalm 95](#), or read it (English Standard Version on next page)
 - The focus for this study are verses 1-5

Come into his presence with thanksgiving!

The word 'presence' literally means to come face-to-face with God. What is the difference in the way people came face-face with God in the Old Testament (Exodus 33 v 18-23) and the New Testament (Hebrews 12 v 18 compared to v 22-24,28).

Do we feel as though we are coming into God's presence on a Sunday morning... is there a magic formula? (clue = imperative words at the start of the Psalm!)

Let us sing to the Lord!

How many times do you see 'Let us' in the first 2 verses? Do we recognise that when we are praising God, it is a collective expression? Have a conversation with the person next to you but use the words "He / She" as opposed to "You". If **We** are in God's presence, how should we address him?

Singing has always been an important way of expressing praise to God (Moses & the Israelites, Miriam, David, Jesus & his disciples, Paul & Silas, a glimpse of heaven in Revelation). In his sermon James pointed out that the style of praising God was quite different between the Old Testament, and New Testament (fewer instruments). He raised the point of cultural changes – the NT was influenced by the Babylonian empire where chanting was the acceptable form of music.

How would you describe today's culture (and compare it to 30 years ago) – How does culture impact on the way we praise God? Is that OK?

Fill in the blanks in this sentence... " ____ looks on the outside, God looks at the _____. Why is it important to remember this when we are praising God?

Because He is God!

CS Lewis said that we cannot diminish God's glory, any more than we can make the sun go out by writing "darkness" on a wall ... God does not need our praise, but he delights in it!

Pick out the words that describe God in the first 5 verses.

Dwelling on those words spend time together before God praising him. Use "We" and "You" as you praise him, you are in his presence 😊

Psalm 95^{English Standard Version Anglicised (ESVUK)}

Let Us Sing Songs of Praise

95 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

²Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.

⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

⁷For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹when your fathers put me to the test
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

¹⁰For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart,
and they have not known my ways."

¹¹Therefore I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter my rest."