

Worship

discussion guide

based on **2 Samuel 6** (Linked to sermon of 27/11/16)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was part of our series on David from the OT – looking at his characteristics that made God describe him as “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13.22). The aim of this series is to see how we can be people after God’s own heart as well.

Intro: What’s your current favourite worship song or hymn, and why?

Imagine you have to describe 5 characteristics or attributes of God (eg loving, gracious) to someone who isn’t a Christian. Which characteristics would you choose, and why?

The context: David has captured Jerusalem, and he’s keen to establish the ‘City of David’ as the new religious capital as well as government capital. Hence he wants to bring the Ark of the Covenant to rest there. The Ark symbolised God’s presence with his people as their King and Redeemer. It had previously been captured (what humiliation!), and had then spent years languishing in the back of beyond.

Read 2 Samuel 6.1-8. The praise party comes to a shuddering and tragic halt, because God’s explicit instructions about how to transport the Ark (look at Numbers 4.5-6, 11,15) were ignored. David and co had got a bit blasé about God’s holiness.

On your list of 5 characteristics of God earlier, did you include ‘holy’? Why / why not? Why do you think the modern church tends to downplay God’s holiness? Is it good or bad that we downplay it?

What would help you to enter God’s presence reverently when it comes to worship?

Uzzah did what he thought was right and loving (protecting the Ark from falling to the ground), but was actually sinful. Can you think of other actions (maybe completely unrelated) which might seem right and loving at first sight, but are actually sinful?

Read 2 Samuel 6.9-15. The people worship exuberantly – the phrase ‘with all their might’ is repeated (v5, 14). Why do you think our worship often lacks exuberance? Are those good reasons, or just excuses – or do they indicate a deeper problem? What could you do to be more exuberant in worship?

Read 2 Samuel 6.16-23. David’s wife, Michal, doesn’t like David’s act of worship. In what ways are you tempted to judge others (either positively or negatively) during worship? What would help you avoid a judgmental attitude?

In what ways can your sung worship be inhibited by fear of what others would make of you?

David didn’t struggle with that problem, because he kept his eyes fixed on the Lord (v21-22). How might doing that help you become free-r in sung worship?

In: It’s easy to gripe about bits of sung worship we don’t like (the volume, the style, the words, the length, the repetitiveness ...). Don’t do that today - be positive instead! Think about how you can encourage each other through your worship. The blog “What if I don’t want to sing?” [<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-if-i-don-t-want-to-sing?>] might be helpful with this.

Out: "Isn't it a bit rich that God made us – and then wants us to spend out time singing to him?" How would you answer that question?

Pray:

Pray for our worship bands as they go through a season of big changes. Pray that God will provide the musicians and singers we need to lead our sung worship. Pray for those considering whether to commit to this area of service or not.

Pray about the possible change to our pattern of Sunday services [see the handout if you weren't in on Sunday to pick up a leaflet]. Pray that whatever pattern we land up with, "more of us would feel about to engage deeply with God at our Sunday services , allowing us to express our heartfelt praise and worship, expectant that God will increase our understanding and devotion for him as we do so" [from our vision doc].

Pray that our corporate worship would grow more reverent and exuberant – and that we would focus our eyes on Jesus alone.