

**“Worshipping Together Weekly”**  
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*Third in a series about Discipleship Practices*

Luke 4.14-21; Exodus 32.1-8; Philippians 2.1-11

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If you're reading this online,  
you can see the first two Scripture selections [by clicking here](#).

You've hit the bullseye!

A bullseye is a target. We aim for it. Sometimes we hit it! Sometimes we come close. Sometimes we're blessed just to hit the board. Sometimes we miss wildly. We don't hit the bullseye all the time. Still, it's what we are aiming for. With practice we get better and closer.

Jesus has called us to be his disciples. There are bullseye targets we can aim for to help us follow him. Jamie Holtom and Debbie Johnson talk about 6 of them in their book, *Bullseye: Aiming to Follow Jesus*.<sup>1</sup>

First, we can **Use Spiritual Practices**. I talked about this last Sunday. I gave you a prayer guide to try. (There are extras at the back.)

This week I used it four days out of seven. It slows me, to think with God through the day that just unfolded. I notice how God was with me (and sometimes wonder how God was there!) It helps me release the day that is finishing, so I can better receive the new day God would give.

I'd love to hear how you did with it.

Now, let's look at the next bullseye target: **Worshipping Together Weekly**.

Guess what! You're here! At least today, you've hit this bullseye!

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<sup>1</sup> Jamie Holtom and Debbie Johnson, *Bullseye: Aiming to Follow Jesus* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2015)

## II

Remember we started worship with Jesus in his hometown. It was the Sabbath, he went to his synagogue, his community's house of gathering, *as was his custom*.

Jesus lived a lively, constant relationship with God his Father. Everywhere he went, he experienced God. Still, he also gathered with others to worship God. He did it regularly.

Jesus is our rabbi, our teacher, our master. We follow him, and he makes us more like himself. Jesus' life is the true life we are made for. So we want to pattern our lives like his.

Jesus worshipped. So worshipping God together weekly is our target too.

## III

Worshipping together weekly is my compass. Worship points me in the right direction. It orients me to God. I need that, because I so easily become disoriented.

Remember the reading from Exodus. They were God's People, for heaven's sake! From slavery God had just freed them. With plague upon plague, God had pried them loose from that deadly chain. Their feet had stepped upon the muddy sea floor, their hands brushing against pushed back walls of water, as God delivered them from genocide through the sea.

But toddle Moses off for a few weeks, and they're lost. They don't know where to turn. So they'll turn anywhere. Fashion a calf from their own trinkets, and they'll bow before it and declare it their salvation.

We are no different. Easily disoriented away from God.

Worship returns our gaze above the mountain. It points us to God, our only salvation.

## IV

Worshipping together weekly shows me who God is.

We gather around the font of baptism, and encounter God who comes to us with pure grace: unearned, undeserved, unexpected, and so, so needed. God's love.

We gather around the table of communion, and encounter God who comes to us embodied, and broken, with God's own heart-blood of life poured out to give us life.

We gather around the pages of scripture, and encounter God who lifts us, and troubles us; who enlightens us, and perplexes us; who entangles us and unties us; who speaks through these pages of the ages and speaks right now. We wrestle with God. In the wrestling, God gives blessing.

We gather with hands at our side, hands clasped and hands lifted, and we learn prayer with our Lord Jesus who teaches us to pray.

Worshipping weekly shows us who God is, and how we can be with God.

V

Worshipping God weekly brings us together. I need you.

Having alone-moments with God is so important. But if alone-moments are all we have, we dangerously turn in on ourselves. God made us for each other. My spirituality must include you. We're in this together.

Some Sundays, I don't feel like being here worshipping. Those are the days I most need to come. I need you to carry me.

We need to bring our praying together. We need to bring our singing together. We need to bring our teaching and learning together. When I'm celebrating, I need to weep with you. When I'm sorrowing, I need your joy.

Together we wade into the wisdom of the ages, the rhythms of prayer and praise that we don't make up, but which were given over to us.

This is so much bigger than any one of us. Life with Jesus in the Presence of God is much too rich a treasure for us to ever do it ourselves. Our worship in this little place brings us into spaces as far-reaching as the cosmos and more. We join all creation in celebration.

Worshipping weekly brings us all together.

VI

Worshipping God together weekly is a habit.

A habit is something we do because it's "just what we do." Some habits are bad for us. When something is good for us to do, however, doing it habitually is a good thing. Brushing my teeth is a habit for me. So after I eat, I don't spend a lot of time sitting there, pondering the virtues of dental hygiene. (Flossing, on the other hand. . . .)

When worshipping together weekly has become a habit, then every Sunday does not involve a big decision about whether or not we're going to go to where our church is gathering. It's what we do!

Of course, sometimes we don't. Remember, the bullseye is a target we are aiming for, which does not mean we will always hit it. Some weeks there are good reasons for us to be doing something else. After some meals I don't get to brush my teeth. But miss too much, and we get out of the habit, and it's hard to start again.

The best way to hit the target is to keep throwing at the bullseye: worshipping together weekly. Make worshipping together weekly your bullseye. It is part of the life Jesus is giving you.

## VII

We are now going to share a selection from the Bible.

Worship gathers us to live Jesus' life together, and this reading tells us things about that.

Worship orients us to God, and this reading points us in a surprising direction.

Worship shows us who God is, and this reading shows us Jesus, in whom we see God's true face.

Please read Philippians 2.1-11.  
If you're reading this online, you can see it [by clicking here](#).