

Question: How can we at RRCC unite in wholehearted worship that brings pleasure to God?

Answer: By keeping the Great Commandments: Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbour as yourself (and more—as Jesus Himself has loved us). Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; John 13:34-35.

When we love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength:

- We offer our bodies as living sacrifices of worship in our every action seven days a week, as well as in our corporate worship gatherings (Romans 12:1).
- We worship God wholeheartedly and passionately because worship is an expression of love to God (Psalm 63:1-5).¹
- We joyfully tell God how wonderful He is (Psalm 29:1-2).²
- God's pleasure in our worship is our goal, more important than our personal satisfaction (Haggai 1:8). Our pleasure in worship is bringing God pleasure through our worship (Psalm 92; 100).
- In our worship, we enjoy God Himself, not merely our favourite acts of worship (Psalm 27:4).
- Our whole being responds in worship to the wonder of God's splendour (Psalm 111:1-4).³
- Loving God with all our *heart and soul* results in passionate, heartfelt worship, not mere passivity or distraction.
- Loving God with our entire *mind* results in worship that contemplates God and admires Him with "awe and astonished wonder."⁴

¹ "Worship is treasuring God." Tim Keller, "What It Takes To Worship Well," *Leadership*, Spring 1994, p. 17. Examples of wholehearted worship include David when he brought the ark home to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:12-14) and the woman who did "a beautiful thing" to Jesus when she anointed Him with very expensive perfume (Matthew 26:6-13. See also Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8 and Luke 7:36-50).

² "Worship is a way of gladly reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth." John Piper, *Desiring God*.

³ "Worship is the believer's response of all that he is—mind, emotions, will and body—to all that God is and says and does." Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship*, p. 27.

⁴ A.W. Tozer, *Gems*, p. 6.

- Loving God with all our *strength* means worshipping God with energy and working at worship even when it is challenging.⁵
- We are united in worshipping an *infinite* God who is worthy of a broad approach to worship that employs a variety of expressions and approaches.
- Worship becomes all about God (the One worshipped), not all about us (the worshippers)(Psalm 103:1-2), heightening His pleasure and ours as we are united in our love for Him (Psalm 133).

When we love each other as Jesus loves us:

- We want to help each other worship well. Although worship is focused on God, it is expressed by us. To be a genuine, heartfelt expression of love, we must, in fact, *feel* what we express.⁶ But because we are individuals with different personalities, histories, and preferences, we gravitate to different expressions of love for God in worship. Love for one another turns this around, giving us the desire to help each other worship well (Galatians 5:13-15; Romans 14:19; 15:1-3a; Hebrews 10:24).
- When it comes to our approaches to worship, we are just as concerned about understanding our brothers and sisters as we are about being understood by them (Philippians 2:1-4).
- We gladly work at learning one another's worship languages and at helping them learn ours (Galatians 5:13-15).
- We lovingly invite and offer constructive feedback for the benefit of all (Romans 12:10).
- We sacrifice for one another (1 John 3:16).
- We accept each other rather than judge each other (Romans 14:1-4).
- We value and celebrate, in our worship, both our commonalities and our diversities. We make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, knowing that we are one in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-6), even in our diversity.⁷
- We do our best to enhance our corporate worship by fully engaging. (Psalm 111:1).

⁵This might be in such circumstances as when others' prayers are taxing our powers of concentration, we are singing songs that don't come easily to us, or we need to listen intently to scripture or its exposition when it is not entertaining.

⁶ "Worship means 'to feel in the heart.' A person that merely goes through the form and does not feel anything is not worshipping." A.W. Tozer, *Gems*, p. 6.

⁷ The love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, is sandwiched between chapters 12 and 14, which emphasize the diversity of our gifts. Besides valuing diverse gifts, we also value our age differences (Proverbs 20:29; 1 Timothy 4:12), along with differences in passion, ability, personality, and life experience.

For Discussion:

1. Explain why you agree or disagree that heart-felt obedience to the Great Commandments unites us in wholehearted worship that brings pleasure to God.
2. What other ideas, which are true to God's Word, have the potential to unite us in wholehearted worship that brings pleasure to God?
3. Complete the sentence, "We are best able to worship well when..." In other words, what principles best guide us in planning corporate worship that unites us and brings pleasure to God?