

A Heart of Worship

The Lord has been showing me that worship is so much more than simply singing songs.

The Heart of Worship” by Matt Redman is a song I hear everywhere I go. It was written after the leaders of Redman’s church in England realized that the congregation had lost some of the dynamic that occurs in worship when people are totally involved at a heart level.

In response, Redman said in a recent interview, “The pastor made a brave move: He ‘banned’ the band!” For a while after the pastor took away their props, Redman led worship with only an acoustic guitar or, at times, just voices.

During this season of abstinence from the outward trappings of worship, Redman says everything was stripped away “to check where our hearts were at,” and he was led to write the words to the song that has become so popular: “When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come, longing just to bring something that’s of worth, that will bless Your heart. I’ll bring You more than a song, for a song in itself is not what You have required. You search much deeper within, through the ways things appear; You’re looking into my heart.”

Clearly, worship is not something new; it existed before the beginning of the world. As John Piper writes, “The chief aim of God is to glorify God and enjoy Himself forever.”

However, for too many of us, “worship” is a service we attend on Sunday mornings. Even in charismatic circles, in which the time of praise and worship is an important segment of the service, we tend to interpret praise as the fast songs and

worship as the slow songs we sing before the announcements and the offering.

In many charismatic churches, the music is often performed by trained musicians whose worship music is slick enough for a concert hall or TV performance. Like Redman's church, we just follow the worship leader, singing the well-rehearsed songs projected on a screen and calling that worship.

The Lord has been showing me it is so much more! King David, who according to scriptural accounts was a worshiper and a man after God's own heart, understood the true nature of worship. And the book of Acts prophesies that the kingdom of David will be restored (see 15:16). Many interpret the prophecy to mean that the Tabernacle of David—where worship occurred around the clock—will be reinstated in the church.

I believe God is calling not just Redman's church but also the entire body of Christ back to "the heart of worship." We need to be reminded, as his song says, that "It's all about You, it's all about You, Jesus."

Recently during a time of fasting and prayer I went to the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri, headed by my friend Mike Bickle, where intercessory worship goes on 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More than 400 people from around the country have moved to Kansas City to be a part of this ministry. It's phenomenal, and I felt as if I had a true worship experience basking in the presence of God for three days for hours at a time.

But worship is more than just meditating in God's presence, as Dick Eastman, president of Every Home for Christ, has helped

me see. In his wonderful Delight trilogy (Regal) he maintains that the fulfillment of the prophecy the apostle James quotes in Acts 15:17 (NLT), which declares that “‘the rest of humanity’” will “‘find the Lord, including the Gentiles’” hinges on the restoration of the spirit of intercessory worship to a degree unlike anything the world has ever experienced. He writes in *Heights of Delight* (2002), “I am convinced that only a restoration of a passion for God’s presence will transform whole nations.”

If Eastman is right, the only way we will fulfill the Great Commission—Jesus’ mandate to go and make disciples of all nations (see Matt. 28:19)—is to have a revival of worship-filled intercession in the church. This is not an outlandish claim.

After all, as Eastman notes in his book, “Fasting and worship ... produced powerful results when linked to proclaiming the gospel” in the days of the apostles. In light of this truth, I pray: May we all come to an understanding of both the importance of worship in our own lives and its crucial role in the expansion of God’s kingdom on Earth.

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