

A Weekly Guide for International Prayer Trios

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Prelude: A Change in the Air

My idol has a name: SMOG—otherwise known as *Seeking My Own Glory*. I met him almost ten years ago following a prayer retreat. I suspect he was there long before, but I couldn't see clearly with him around. Very kindly, God exposed him to me when I realized that I had been pursuing my own ministry goals more than God.

In 1991, my husband and I moved across the world to pioneer a ministry with the Navigators in a very large Middle Eastern metropolitan city. I quickly became familiar with a new smell: smog. At the start of every winter, the foul odor of burning coal would fill the air and sting our eyes. We walked the streets and almost tasted it in our mouths. Some days, it was so thick that we couldn't see more than a meter in front of us. It left a brown tint over the whole city, making all things hazier. Eventually, as the winter wore on, we would become accustomed to it, and it didn't seem so bad. Then, with the onset of spring and the blooming of the tulips, the whole city would brighten as coal burning decreased. It was then that we realized how much the smog stole from us.

“. . . everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light” (Ephesians 5:13).

Waking Up

Spiritually speaking, my idol SMOG has similar effects on my walk with God and on my ministry. What a stench! SMOG pollutes my thinking. Life and ministry get interpreted through the nasty smell of, “How does this make me look?” or the brown haze of, “What will they think of me?” Even ministry goals that God has placed deep in my heart, can be impacted by SMOG. It causes me to reason away the promptings of the Holy Spirit, or to keep my mouth shut in a group, for fear of risking my own glory. I become fixated on God answering my prayers *a certain way* and at *a particular time*. Perhaps the most wretched thing about SMOG is that once you live with him too long, you don't even smell him anymore.

“Therefore, it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” (Ephesians 5:14).

When I mention SMOG, there's always a little nervous laughter in the room. It turns out I'm not alone. I repeatedly hear some version of the following:

- “I seem to have lost my joy. I've become so fixated on myself that I have forgotten to seek God for God.”
- “I worry so much about making a (cultural/ language/relational) mistake, that I don't share.”
- “I'm tired of trying to do things in my own strength. Ministry is overwhelming. I'm running on empty.”
- “I've been seeking God's hand and not his face.”

Waking up to these realities is a wonderful grace. I think God is kindly exposing SMOG in many of our ministries—not for our shame, but for our freedom and deliverance. We can receive it as a gift and allow it to help us respond to our greatest need.

My Greatest Need

I once heard the story of a young blind man who was betrothed to the daughter of a wealthy and high-ranking army official. When the blind man asked the father for permission to marry his daughter, the father agreed. But he asked the young man to undergo a risky operation that could restore his sight. He said he would pay for the procedure. The young man agreed, with one condition: After the operation, he would leave his eyes bandaged until the moment his bride walked down the aisle and stood in front of him. If the operation worked, the first thing he wanted to see was his bride at the altar. If it didn't work, he would still marry her as a blind man.

On the day of the wedding, after the bride walked down the aisle, all watched with bated breath while the bandages were carefully removed from the groom's eyes. When the last of the gauze was carefully peeled off, the

young man stood staring for what seemed like an eternity. Then, with wonder and awe, he whispered to his bride, "You're more beautiful than I ever imagined."

When the veil is finally lifted in heaven and our eyes are able to see Jesus for the first time, we will gaze on him and gasp, "You're more beautiful, good, kind, powerful, just and wonderful than I ever imagined!"

Meanwhile, I rejoice here on earth. As every layer of gauze peels off, I can see him more clearly. My greatest need is for the gauze that covers my spiritual eyes to be removed! It is expressed simply and beautifully by author Joy Dawson: "Our greatest need is for a far greater revelation of what [God is] really like." When this one need is met, *everything* changes.

The day God helped me to see SMOG, he invited me to stop wallowing in my sin and to *behold* the Son, and to watch him burn away all other idols. "My determined purpose," says Paul in Philippians 3:10, "is that I may know him that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of his person more strongly and more clearly."

In order to perceive and recognize Jesus more clearly, I *must* have time in the secret place. However, when it comes to effectively removing gauze from my eyes, I need the help of others. I cannot do it alone.

Removing the Gauze Together

The following prayer guide is, at its core, a simple way for us to keep our eyes on Jesus . . . *together*.

May the blessings of beholding God together overflow into our intercession, causing our prayers to be bigger, bolder, more faith-filled, and with a deep sense of joyful expectancy, like spring flowers that whisper, "There is change in the air . . . for now is the time to arise and come away with me" (Song of Songs 2:13).

Introduction: Intercessory Worship for Prayer Trios

The term *intercessory worship* was coined by Dick Eastman. But we see it practiced in Revelation 5:8-10. The worshipers come before the Lamb with harps (symbols of worship) in one hand and bowls (symbols of prayer and intercession) in the other. They seem to combine these in a song never sung before. *It is a song of global harvest!*

This is a beautiful picture of “intercessory worship.” We want to bring a song of harvest for our regions (or communities) through concentrated, passionate, worship-saturated prayer that rises with the fragrance of incense before God’s throne. In response, we believe that God will release his power to accomplish his purposes for the harvest (see Revelation 5:8-10; 8:1-6).

John Piper wrote: “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever” (from *Let the Nations Be Glad*, p. 11).

The next sections provide a week-by-week framework for intercessory worship together in trios.

How to Use the Prayer Trios Guide

Three People—Three Countries—Three Months

The following prayer trio guidelines are designed for small prayer groups to connect online or in-person (when possible). In our region, three people from three different countries in our region met via video conference. A small group of three people allows all the participants to pray equally. The prayer guide is designed to be used weekly for three months (12 weeks). Group members can take turns facilitating your prayer times simply by following the guides.

Each guide consists of:

A short devotional on worship followed by a “prayer idea” section. This is because a culture of prayer is fueled by experience, not just explanation. These prayer ideas are a way to put the teaching into practice in our contexts. There is added richness, momentum, and strength when we do this *together!*

Friday fasting

We suggested that each group try to connect on the same day when possible. Our region chose Friday. It was highly motivating to know that all over our region, groups of three were gathering on the same day to cover our region in prayer.

We also encouraged each trio to join an optional fast on the prayer day. Many groups chose to fast in various way (social media, coffee, sweets, one or two meals, etc.). It was powerful to hear of groups all over the region supporting one another, being accountable, and growing together in fasting with prayer.

Important: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Worship is the reason we live. A.W. Tozer said it succinctly: “We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God” (*That Incredible Christian*, p. 46). As chosen people, we are “to declare the praises” of God (1 Peter 2:9). Hence worship is both *how* we live and *why* we live. With this in mind, the goals for the intercessory worship prayer trios include the following:

1. To have worship *increasingly* become our way of life. Why? Because he is worthy. He never changes and he is our only enduring motive for praying together. As we meet, our desire is to be more captivated with the majesty and glory of God! Without this goal, our ministries are without purpose. As A.W. Tozer effectively points out: “What good is all our busy religion if God isn’t in it? What good is it if we’ve lost the majesty, reverence, worship—an awareness of the Divine? What good is it if we’ve lost a sense of the Presence and the ability to retreat within our own hearts and meet God in the garden? If we’ve lost that, why build another church? Why make more converts to an effete Christianity? Why bring people to follow a Savior so far off that he doesn’t own them?” (*The Attributes of God*, p. 194-195).
2. We want our intercession for harvest in the region (or in our communities) to *be part of* and to *flow directly from* worship. We must train ourselves to have intercession flow out of worship, because this will enlarge our view of God and our trust in him. It will change the way we pray, as Max Lucado illustrates in his book *Just Like Jesus*:

Worship is the act of magnifying God (Psalm 34:3), enlarging our vision of him, and observing how he works. . . . Of course, his size doesn’t change, but our perception of him does. As we draw nearer, he seems larger. Isn’t that what we need? A *big* view of God? Don’t we have *big* problems, *big* worries, and *big* questions? Of course we do. Hence, we need a big view of God. Worship offers that. How can we sing, “Holy, Holy, Holy” and not have our vision expanded? How can we sing these words and not have our countenance illuminated?



A PRAYER IDEA

SPEAK OF HIS WORTH

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Before you start your first prayer time, take some time to get to know each other a little better. You might want to try these questions:

- What is one of your earliest memories with God?
- Who is someone you really admire in the faith and why?

Go a little deeper: Jesus asked the blind men in Matthew 20:32, “*What do you want me to do for you?*”

- Picture Jesus standing in front of *you* and asking the same question. *What do you want me to do for you? More specifically, what do you want me to do for this prayer trio time?* Share with one another a specific grace (gift) that comes to mind to ask Jesus for this week and/or for this prayer trio time.

Read aloud: In your group, read aloud Revelation 5:8-10 and 8:1-6.

Discuss: Begin the discussion by answering this question:

- What do these passages tell me about God? What kind of God is he?

Worship: Turning your discussion to praise, take some extended time just to worship God and thank him for what you saw about him in the text. Hold all prayer requests for the next section; this time is for worship.

Intercede: Based on (flowing out of) what you just praised and thanked God for from Revelation, pray for each other. You can pray through the requests previously shared in the “Go a little deeper” section.

David sang to the Lord, “You are holy, enthroned in (inhabiting/seated) the praises of Israel” (Psalm 22:3). The thought here is that God dwells—reveals himself—where his people praise him. *He inhabits that very place.*

Right now, on this side of heaven, amid all the brokenness and pain, I have the distinct and unique privilege to create a heavenly climate here on earth, by faith . . . and I do this with my praises. My adoration in silence, song or spoken worship invites God—in all his beauty, goodness, kindness, power, justice and wonder—to fill my world and circumstances *today*. With my worship, I create a dwelling place, as it were, for God in my present situation.

Does he not already dwell here? Yes, he does; but I am more blind to it. Through worship, I get to see him enthroned! (And perhaps he feels more welcome!) In some mysterious way, the reality of who he is comes in and sits with me. He comes into my darkness and pushes it away with light. He expels the SMOG and ushers in fresh clarity, spring tulips. The more I worship, the more I see. With awe and wonder, I whisper, “You’re more beautiful than I ever imagined.”

Thus, worship enthrones God *in my experience*. It welcomes in the extraordinary fullness of who he is into my ordinary life. I especially love Psalm 22:3 from this Japanese translation: “When God’s people praise Him, he brings in a big chair and sits there.”

Inspired by this, my husband and I turned an old storage room in the basement of our office into a prayer room. By faith we worshiped the Lord in that place, believing that our praises were rising up, changing the atmosphere. We sensed the Lord bringing in his big chair and sitting in our meetings, in our decision-making phone calls, in our coffee breaks with staff. Recently a Muslim staff member commented, “There’s something different in this office. You feel it when you walk in. It’s like *he’s* here.” This opened the doors to share about Jesus and his big chair!

Worship creates a heavenly climate for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. One follows the other: “Sing praises to the LORD [worship], enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations [Great Commission] what he has done” (Psalm 9:11).

Worship brings God into our circumstances in all his fullness and “unleashes explosive potential for the transformation of communities, peoples and even entire nations,” says Eastman.

So, let’s create a dwelling place for God in our present situations!



A PRAYER IDEA

ESTABLISH A “THRONE ZONE”

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Describe a personal challenge or stronghold in your life or ministry in which there is a clear need for the reign of God to be established.

Discuss who do you need God to be in this need or situation (shepherd, teacher, guide, comforter, Father). Another way to do this is to ask God, “Who do you want to be for me/them in this situation?”

Be still: Take one or two minutes to sit in silence together, simply allowing yourselves to become aware of God’s presence with you.

Worship: Praise God for being what is needed, using Scripture as it comes to mind. For example, if you need him be your teacher, you might say: "I worship you because Isaiah 28 describes you as a 'wonderful teacher.' I praise you because the crowds in Matthew 7 were astonished and filled with wonder at your teaching."

Give thanks: Acknowledge with awe and thank God for "bringing in a chair" and sitting with you as you praise!
Declare that God is all those things you just praised him for and declare that he is enthroned in *every* situation!

Intercede: Agreeing with each other and building on each other's prayers, intercede for the situations and needs you shared. Pray also for the region where you live and work. Ask again for a culture of worship to emerge among us that will create "a heavenly climate for the fulfillment of the Great Commission" in the whole region.

This week, we flip the idea of God “sitting” with us and explore the experience of us sitting with him—in silence. Revelation 8:1 says, “There was silence in heaven for about half an hour.” Can you imagine it? It must have been profound! Sometimes absolute silence might be our greatest act of worship.

I’ve kept a journal on how spending time in silence with God has changed me. What started as a way of expressing worshipful longing for God has now become so much more. For example, silence is a way of presenting myself to him, like the “spiritual act of worship” that Paul describes in Romans 12:1. The seventeenth century writer Fenelon speaks of places in our spiritual lives that need surgery. He asks, “Who could do the job of cutting away sin better than he?” Even if we knew where to cut, and we often don’t, we wouldn’t know how deep to go or have the courage to get it all. But our Father knows what we need, where, when, and how deeply to operate. (See *Let Go* by Fenelon, p. 86.) Sitting with him in silence is a worshipful way of availing ourselves to his expert hands to do with us as he wills.

I’ve also noticed that I find myself smiling during times of silence. There is something incredibly freeing and enjoyable about his presence, even as he operates. Repeatedly in silent prayer, a thought washes over me: *You are God, and I am not*. This echoes Ecclesiastes 5:2. It leads me to a new understanding of A.W. Tozer’s description of the fear of God:

When we come into this sweet relationship, we are beginning to learn astonished reverence, breathless adoration, awesome fascination, lofty admiration of the attributes of God and something of the breathless silence that we know when God is near. You may never have realized it before, but all of those elements in our perception and consciousness of the Divine Presence add up to what the Bible calls, ‘the fear of God’ (*Whatever Happened to Worship*, p. 30).

It’s wonderful to consider that silence might also help to advance God’s kingdom into the nations. He commands, “Be silent and know that I am God! I will be honored in every nation” (Psalm 46:10). Here we discover that being silent in God’s presence is an act of worship linked to impacting nations, knowing God, and even settling our anxious fears.



A PRAYER IDEA

TO START, WE MUST STOP

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Read: Together read Psalm 46:10 and the following quote by Pete Greig, the founder of the 7/24 Prayer Movement.

To start we must stop. To move forward we must pause. This is the first step in a deeper prayer life: Put down your wish list and wait. Sit quietly: “Be still and know that I am God.” Become fully present in place and time so that your scattered senses can re-center themselves on God’s eternal presence. Stillness and silence prepare your mind and prime your heart to pray from a place of greater peace, faith, and adoration. In fact, these are themselves important forms of prayer (*How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*, p. 33)

Practicalities: Next your group can practice worshipping in silence. Although it might seem counterintuitive, doing this together can help everyone persevere in this type of worship. Also, it’s normal in times of silence for your mind to wander. If it does, it’s helpful to whisper something like “Be still” and then release the thought ever-so-gently, recentering yourself on God. Regular practice of silence before God has two effects: It helps you to encounter God firsthand and it humbles your soul before him. You become more aware of God’s gentle, subsuming presence around and within you.

Practice silence: Read Revelation 1:12-17 together out loud. Then set a timer for five minutes. Relax. Breathe deeply. Then be silent, remembering the Jesus described in these verses is near. Encounter God by sitting in astonished reverence, breathless adoration, awesome fascination, lofty admiration, and breathless silence for five minutes.

Respond in praise: When the timer goes off, begin to praise God out loud together, using Revelation 1:12-17 as fuel for worship.

Lay it down: Many of us are struggling with fear; not the godly kind, but the anxious kind! How wonderful that we get to “approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Share with each other the anxieties that you or your family and friends are feeling. Picture taking these fears one by one and lay them at the feet of Jesus as you pray for one another.

“Above all, my child, think magnificently of God. Magnify his providence; adore his power, pray to him frequently and incessantly. Bear him always in your mind. Teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place for there is not place where he is not. Therefore, my child, fear and worship and love God; first and last, think magnificently of him!” (*Advice to a Son* by Paternus).

During the time that ISIS was gaining ground and power in places too close for comfort, about eight hundred workers within the Muslim world gathered to seek God’s help. How does one begin to pray in the face of a force so daunting? Many were living in places that were being bombed or severely threatened. The fear was palpable.

I shall never forget how the worship band led us to God’s throne room. In that place, we stood before God with reverence, we sang, we danced, we rejoiced in who God is. We lingered there in awe. And then, seated in the heavenly places with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), we looked down on the crisis evolving in our neighborhoods and prayed *from that place*. Our perspective had shifted, making God magnificent and ISIS insignificant by comparison. All fear was gone! The intercession that rose from our hearts was confident, victorious, humble, and dependent.

“No one will be able to rise to the magnificence of the missionary cause who does not feel the magnificence of Christ. There will be no big world vision without a big God,” wrote John Piper in *Let the Nations Be Glad* (p. 40).

Navigator Lee Brase taught me read the Scriptures while looking for one thing: to get to *know* God. He suggested that I ask questions such as: Who are you? What are you like? What kind of God would you have to be to do this or say that? This naturally leads to wonder and worship. How could it not?

It’s easy for us to fill our prayers with this “bad thing” and that “horrible circumstance” without voicing anything about God’s greatness or power. We fill our prayers with many pressing problems, to the point that we almost lose faith. We hardly believe victory is possible. We are evidently more impressed with our own struggles than we are with the awesomeness of God.

But when biblical revelation of God’s greatness spills into our prayers, we notice that the bigger we see God through worship, the smaller Satan becomes in his capacity to defeat us. And the more we see God’s magnificence, the more powerful our prayers of intercession become. Worship becomes our intercession; it turns into warfare! Our lungs are filled with faith so that we can breathe out prayers that align with who God is.

“You’ve trained me with the weapons of warfare-worship; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You empower me for victory with your wraparound presence. Your power within makes me strong to subdue . . .” (Psalm 18:34-35).

The Psalmist longed to discover God in all his greatness. He wanted to see God big. “Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together” (Psalm 34:3).

It will take some big prayers to totally transform a region or a community. So, let’s not let the enemy make God small in our thinking, praying, or planning! Worship God fervently. Worship Him passionately. Worship Him extravagantly. You will soon see God big—and pray big prayers!



A PRAYER IDEA

BIG GOD, BIG PRAYERS

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Read aloud: Colossians 1:13-23

Be still: Spend two or three minutes in worshipful silence.

Speak back to God what you see about his nature in Colossians 1:13-23. Linger in this place of praise and do not rush. Worship God fervently. Worship him passionately. Worship him extravagantly!

Intercede: Turn your worship into BIG prayers for your region or community. Speak out over the region *who Christ is*, asking for eyes to be opened to see him as he is described in Colossians 1. Pray the same for each other and for specific people in your ministry. Declare the Lord's greatness in comparison to every enemy attack.

“In your presence is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11).

I’m not naturally a joyful person. But is joy optional? When I consider that those brought near to God find joy, I get a glimpse into all that’s intended for me. The closer I draw to God, the closer I come to the One who has the oil of gladness poured over him more than all his brethren (Hebrews 1:9). I find that he’s in a good mood! And he—and his joy—is my inheritance. “What joy for those you choose to bring near” (Psalm 65:4).

For almost a decade, my husband and I suffered the repeated loss of unborn babies. Intense disappointment seemed to follow me around like an unwanted stray dog, yapping at me. Sometimes sadness would dissipate, and I would think it had passed. But then I’d see a pregnant woman and the dog would pounce out of nowhere and bite me.

One rainy November morning, the Lord led me to Hebrews 13:15: “Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.” I was struck by the fact that offering praise is a *sacrifice*. And sacrifices are painful! This was strangely comforting and inviting. I wondered if I would look back at this season of my life and acknowledge that God had been good to me? Could I offer a sacrifice of praise purely by faith, simply because I believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord?

I decided to offer the fruit of my lips as a sacrifice. I told God that I believed he would take *even this* and use it for my healing. It was painful to offer praise for my circumstances, but I found that I could worship him *for who he is*, and I could praise him for what he would do with my pain. And so I did that with all my heart. I chose to believe that day that I would see the goodness of the Lord even through my loss (Psalm 27:14).

A miracle followed. The cloud of disappointment completely dissipated for the first time since my first miscarriage. That yapping dog ran away! In its place I received a gift of increased faith and inexplicable peace. I was overcome with tears—happy tears! *Real joy*. I remember thinking, “I can face anything with Jesus; he even affects my emotions!”

Francis of Assisi, the son of a twelfth-century Italian merchant, seemed to have discovered how to find the joy of God in all things plain and ordinary. Assisi’s life was clearly a journey of joy. He impacted millions, including a humble seventeenth-century monk, Brother Lawrence, who wrote prolifically on the joy of practicing the presence of God. Both Francis of Assisi and Brother Lawrence lived through difficult circumstances. They were isolated and misunderstood, even imprisoned. Yet they discovered that pure worship of God involved entering his courts and finding true joy (Psalm 100). Joy permeated their difficult and dull days.

The apostle Paul must have had a season in his life when he pursued inner contentment (3 John 2). In Philippians 4:10-11, he said, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content . . .” He learned to be content whether he was prospering or in lack. Let’s get serious about joy! It may never seem convenient, but through heart-felt worship, we can learn to walk in joy, even in the midst of imperfect circumstances.



A PRAYER IDEA

CHOOSE TO REJOICE

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Pause: Set a timer for one or two minutes. Simply and worshipfully pause in God’s presence. Enjoy the awareness that the Lord of creation is attentive to you.

Rejoice: Read Psalm 8 aloud together. Spend at least fifteen minutes in rejoicing worship, focusing on what Psalm 8 says about who God is and what he is like. You might also tell God what you love about His creation.

Ask: This week we want to remember the laborers in our region (or community) who are suffering from depression, isolation, or financial difficulty. Ask that fresh joy would be released into our walks with God, amid these tough circumstances.

Yield: “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1). It’s by *surrendering* to God that we overcome, by *emptying* ourselves that we are filled, and by *yielding* our lives in prayer that our lives themselves become a prayer. Close your prayer time by discussing how you might yield to cultivate intentional worship in your life this coming week. Pray for each other.

“. . . that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”
(1 Peter 2:9).

Do you repeatedly go back to your favorite meal? Of course you do! This week we pause on our journey to “gather the graces” from the first five weeks. This repetition is like savoring the flavor of a previous encounter with God, an opportunity to go deeper with him. To do this, let’s first “chew on” some key thoughts we’ve tasted so far.

Week 1: Make worship a way of life. Intercessory worship is pictured beautifully in Revelation 5:8-10 and 8:1-6. The worshipers come before the Lamb with harps (worship) in one hand and bowls (intercession) in the other. Likewise, we desire to bring a song of harvest *for our region* through concentrated, passionate, “worship-saturated” prayer that rises with the fragrance of incense before God’s throne. We train ourselves so that intercession is *part of* and *flows directly from* our worship. This will enlarge our view of God and our trust in him. For this, he is worthy!

Week 2: Bring in that big chair. “When God’s people praise him, he brings in a big chair and sits there” (Japanese translation of Psalm 22:3). Worship creates a dwelling place for God in our present situation, suggesting that when we begin declaring God’s praises over our needs or nation, we are literally establishing his throne amid those needs or nations.

Week 3: Give quiet time a new meaning. “We are beginning to learn astonished reverence, breathless adoration, awesome fascination, lofty admiration of the attributes of God and something of the silence that we know when God is near” (A.W. Tozer, writing on what *fear of God* might look like). We practiced this fear of God by reflecting on Revelation 1:12-17 and by experiencing the “be still” of Psalm 46:10. We explored the lost of art of silence as a form of worship.

Week 4: Make God magnificent. John Piper said that, “No one will be able to rise to the magnificence of the missionary cause who does not feel the magnificence of Christ.” And Psalm 34:3 reminded us that worship is the act of magnifying the Lord or *seeing* him as big. Worship helps us view negative situations with a clearer perspective of faith, which leads to praying bigger, bolder prayers! To help us see Jesus as exalted, we prayed through Colossians 1:13-23 and worshiped God extravagantly, passionately, and fervently!

Week 5: Get serious about joy! Psalm 16:11 beautifully reminded us that, “In your presence is fullness of joy.” We considered how we might cultivate intentional worship as part of a daily habit that creates joy in our lives and impacts the nations around us. We prayed through Psalm 8 and rejoiced over God’s creation and all that it says about who he is and what he’s like. “What joy for those who are always singing Your praises!” (Psalm 84:4).



A PRAYER IDEA

A PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Have the leader pray Psalm 18:28 over the group: “You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.” Ask God to help each person understand his or her own individual journeys with God.

Considering the above review, spend a few quiet minutes each prayerfully asking God:

- When did I feel most alive and responsive to God? Which week’s devotional brought noticeable light?
- When did I feel more unresponsive? Why is that?
- Which week’s practice is God leading me to pursue more deeply Why?

Briefly share your thoughts with your prayer trio. Then, based on what you shared, agree to pray with one or two passages listed above. As you revisit them, try “new bites” and/or “savor the flavors” again. Consider following the chart below as you pray together through your selected passage.

Pause	Rejoice	Ask	Yield
<p>Become fully present in place and time so that your scattered senses can recenter on the Father’s eternal presence. Silence and stillness prepare your mind and prime your heart to pray from a place of greater peace, faith, and adoration. In fact, these are important forms of prayer.</p>	<p>No one stares at the northern lights thinking, <i>Wow, I’m incredible!</i> We are hardwired for awe and wonder and therefore to worship. Hallowing our Father is the most important and enjoyable dimension of prayer. Linger here, rejoicing in God’s blessings before asking for more. Speak his praise from what you read.</p>	<p>Prayer invites us to ask for “daily bread” and the “kingdom come” for ourselves and for others. Explore the extraordinary, miracle-working power of prayer as you pray for each other and the region. Ask for a culture of worship to grow in your region or community, which will impact the nations.</p>	<p>Surrender and yield to God’s presence “on earth as it is in heaven” by offering your obedience to his will, and your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. It’s by surrendering to God that we overcome, by emptying ourselves that we are filled, and by yielding that our lives become a prayer.</p>

“As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush . . . so that they were routed” (2 Chronicles 20:22).

The story of Jehoshaphat putting the worshipers out in front of his army inspires me. Enter into battle with worship! “As they began to sing and praise,” the Lord defeated the enemy. What would happen if we began to *expect* the God who performs miracles to display his power among us when we start to sing and praise?

We walked into the tiny basement room in our office. Earlier that year, we had converted a small storage space into a prayer room. “He’s here,” I thought, as I took my seat to worship and pray. My husband, who co-owns and runs the business, takes daily breaks to sit with the Lord in that sacred place and consult him on all affairs, business and personal. We now sat together and began to worship, using the promises God gave us for the business as fuel.

“Yes, you’re here,” I began, “for you promised, ‘My Spirit stands and abides in the midst of you; fear not’” (Haggai 2:5). What a wonder! As we worshiped, another promise from Zechariah 8:21 came to mind. It says, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts; I myself am going.” With a faith that rose out of our worship, we began to declare that one employee would go to another, and say, “Let’s go down to the prayer room and seek the Lord, I myself am going.” Why not? If he did it before, he can do it again!

Just then, there was a knock on the door. Ferah (not her real name) walked in. “I have no idea why I’m here,” she began. “It was as if a magnet drew me in!” My husband excused himself and I welcomed Ferah to sit with me. Presently there was a second knock on the door. Another employee poked her head in, and, looking at Ferah, she said, “I came as soon as I could.” Turning to me, she explained, “Ferah told me she was going to the prayer room to seek God and invited me to come with her.”

My jaw just about hit the floor! With full assurance of the Spirit’s nearness again, I felt emboldened to tell these precious Muslim co-workers about Jesus. After a lively discussion, I asked if I could pray for them. When I bowed my head and put out my hands to pray, both women grabbed them tightly. I hadn’t expected that! When I finished praying, Ferah smiled shyly and said, “There is something in this room, some kind of peace or power. I thought that if I held your hands, I might get some.”

This wonderful story reminds me of Luke 12:32. Jesus says, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” I want to live with *joyful expectation* because my Father *delights* in responding to my praises—even in miraculous ways! Mysteriously, our worship seems to enlist God.

Consider A.W. Tozer’s observation: “Whenever the church has come out of her lethargy, rising from her sleep and into the tides of revival and spiritual renewal, always the worshipers were back of it.”

Reaching an entire region—or our immediate neighbors—with the Gospel is going to require *a miracle!* We *desperately* need the God of the miraculous and all his unique plans and creative strategies. Without him, it is hopeless and daunting. Apart from him we can do nothing (John 15:5). On our own, we’re utterly powerless! But worship *enlists* God and intercession *involves* God, together resulting in a release of hope, wisdom, and power into our circumstances.

“O our God, will you not [advance your kingdom in our region]? For we are powerless . . . We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. . . . We give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever” (2 Chronicles 20:12 and 21).



A PRAYER IDEA

ETERNALLY GRATEFUL

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

“You are a God who performs miracles; You display Your power among the peoples” (Psalm 77:14).

Pause: Spend two or three minutes in silence, becoming fully present to God. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Rejoice: “Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever” (2 Chronicles 20:21). This powerful call to worship was declared in the face of a terrifying battle. Consider some eternal things for which you could give thanks, even if you’re in a valley, facing a huge army and don’t know what to do! Think. About God. Consider:

- His eternal titles (*the nouns* or many names he has)
- His enduring attributes (*the adjectives* that describe him)
- His everlasting works (*the verbs*, or the things he does)

Then *pray*, offering him the praise and thanks he deserves. Declare: “I give thanks to you, for . . .

Ask: Think of a “battle” you are facing. Enlist the fullness of the eternal, miracle-working God into this valley. No matter the outcome, ask God specifically to turn the valley into a place of praise: “On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berakah, where they praised the Lord. This is why it is called the Valley of Berakah [Valley of Praise] to this day” (2 Chronicles 20:26). Trust God for renewal to come!

Yield: End the time of prayer with another two or three minutes of silence during which you intentionally yield the outcome of your prayers to God, saying (without words), “I trust You. I surrender to You. I will praise You forever.”

“My sons, do not now be negligent, for the Lord has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to Him and to be His ministers and make offerings to Him” (2 Chronicles 29:11).

Hezekiah exhorted the priests and Levites not to neglect one of the most awesome and mysterious privileges we have: to minister to God. Isn't it staggering to think that the *created* would be able to minister to the *Creator*? Thanksgiving and praise are powerful ways that priests (ourselves included) minister to God. It delights his heart.

When are we likely to be negligent of this awesome privilege?

1. When life is hard. It helps me to remember that Psalm 50:23 and Hebrews 13:15 talk about a *sacrifice* of praise, like giving my Father a very costly gift. In glory, I'll see my circumstances in the light. I'll know his goodness in its fullness and my worship will flow freely. But here on earth, I get to offer a *sacrifice* of praise—sometimes in the dark and by sheer faith—and I think that such precious trust must surely delight God's heart in a unique way that only I can do out of my own story; a ministry I can only do while I am still on this earth.
2. When our hearts are hard. The truth is, it's not always easy to enter into and linger in a place of worship. If you've ever taken off in an airplane during a storm, you will know that the first minutes of the journey can be bumpy. Rain sprays at the window and the wind rocks the aircraft. The whole fuselage feels like it's groaning and struggling to push through the thick, dark clouds. But then, suddenly, the plane breaks above the clouds! Up there, it is gloriously sunny and calm! The view is spectacular and crystal clear. When we come to stand before the Lord in worship, it can start off like a bumpy take off. We may not “feel” like ministering to him. We are easily distracted by the rain beating against us, or the howling winds that seem to blow us away from the time we set aside to praise. Yet if we resolve to persist, to push through and remain in the place of worship, eventually we will break through into the place above the storm, where we gain a different perspective. Our worship moves from a mere resolve to a heartfelt connection with God. Our Lord is worthy of his bride demonstrating to him that he is worth pushing through any storm!

I'm encouraged to not be negligent in these two areas as I consider my unique earthly gift of praise to God and how worthy he is of my persistence. But there's another potent reason for me not to give up. It's seen throughout the psalms. We read exhortations like this one: “Praise His name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp . . .” Psalm 149:3-4 adds: “For the Lord delights in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.” Here, God's delight in his people who minister to him is described in the context of worship. Notice how this psalm continues: “Let the praises of God be in their mouths and a sharp sword in their hands—to execute vengeance on the nations” (Psalm 149:6-7).

In numerous psalms (see 66:1-4,8; 67; 96:1-3; 7-10; 98:1-4), praise is described as touching all the nations, which is surely a reason why our worship so ministers to God's heart. The nations are on his heart! Piper articulates this third reason for us not to be negligent in worship: “When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will shine to the most remote peoples on earth” (*Let the Nations Be Glad*).



A PRAYER IDEA

I DELIGHT IN YOU

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other's prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Read Zephaniah 3:17 aloud. Then, using “sanctified imagination,” quietly reflect for a couple of minutes on the idea of God being a “mighty warrior” who is with us and how this image might give added insight into the verse. Take turns speaking back your wonder and thanks to God for what he reveals. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11). We are created *for his pleasure!*

Ask God to grow your *desire* to please him.

Share: Express to God the ways you would like to please him this week.

Pray: “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14). Pray also for the other prayer trios and/or laborers in your region (community). Ask that God would ignite the flame in our hearts to recognize his worth and worship him without negligence, and that our passion for God would fuel bold, loving witness to those around us this coming week.

“I will thank you, Lord, in front of all the people. I will sing your praises among the nations” (Psalm 57:9).

This week let’s consider the impact of our spoken (and sung!) praises among the nations. Proverbs 18:21 says that life and death are in the power of our tongue. Could it be that our spoken praises somehow release hope, light, truth—*life*—into our neighborhoods, cities, and nations?

The following is a personal testimony. It continues to encourage me that powerful things can happen in the unseen world when I exalt God “in front of the people” and “among the nations.”

I woke up early one morning with a melody in my heart. My heart had been heavy, but the song felt like a gift for my heaviness. Gratefully, I carried the song into my prayer time, singing it to the Lord. As I did, my sadness lifted and I experienced the comfort and peace of God.

Immediately my thoughts went to a local friend who was in a hard place. I knew her heart was breaking. As I went to pray for her, I felt the Spirit nudging me to sing over her. I had no idea how to do that, but I decided to try. Rather hesitantly, I imagined her asleep in her room, and I pictured myself there with her. I sang the worship song to the Lord “over” my friend as she slept, longing for her ears to somehow be opened to its truth. It felt like I was declaring the goodness of God in song over her heartache and difficult situation. It felt powerful.

When I finished, I asked the Lord, “Now how shall I pray for her?” I sensed his answer. “You just did. All I want you to do now is send her a message letting her know you have prayed for her.” Intrigued with the idea that my song was a prayer, I picked up my phone and typed out a short message to my friend.

About an hour later my phone lit up with a reply. Her message read, “I can’t believe you were praying for me, because right about that time, I had a dream about you. You came into my room, picked up my baby and held me and the baby in a big hug. And then you sang a song to us. I was so comforted, I felt incredible peace, it was just what I needed.”

Dick Eastman writes that “the shock wave of our praise is unaffected by distance, different time zones, or different languages, culture and political systems.” It truly is “a spiritual force to be reckoned with!” (*Intercessory Worship*, p. 91). This idea is captivating, exhilarating, inviting! May we arise to the invitation to speak life over the lost and needy around us!



A PRAYER IDEA

EXALT GOD “OVER” YOUR COMMUNITY, Part 1

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

“... if and when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).

We have come to the climax of our prayer trio times. Now, we get to put it all together and create a specific prayer tool that will serve our immediate group and that can be shared with other groups. This tool can be a prayer resource for the whole region (or community).

In our trios, we each have people who represent at least two or three countries or different parts of a town. Starting from this base, we’re going to:

1. Make our own prayer map with strategic and specific prayer needs.

2. Exalt God over the map in prayer.

Getting ready: Find (online, a book, etc.) of all three places represented by your prayer trio. You can use one for your whole group or make one map for each person. You will need four sticky notes for each person in your trio. Visual aids in prayer are highly motivating. I encourage you not to skip this part! I once drew the map of our country on a huge old bedsheet. Our team used to spread it over the dining room table and lay hands on certain cities to pray and worship over them. We found this provided added focus and motivation.

For today: Invite one of your trio friends to share, as shown below. (In coming weeks, others will share.)

1. What is one *general* need and opportunity for your nation or area to come to Christ?
2. What is one *specific* need and opportunity in order for the kingdom to come into your sphere of influence? (Name an individual or describe a particular situation.)

Write down what your friend shares on your sticky notes and place it over the area in question. An example is shown below.

COUNTRY: T	NEED	OPPORTUNITY
GENERAL	I believe humility and courage are needed in T for locals to come to Christ. Humility, because national <i>and</i> religious pride prevents them from looking to Jesus. Courage, because they are afraid of what others around them will think, if they do.	Covid-19 is an opportunity! Many nationals are in a desperate place, watching the idols of health, finance and education being shaken by the pandemic. There is a unique opportunity to find the truth of Christ through believing friends.
SPECIFIC	Pray for two moms and two teens who are reading the Bible with me. I sense they need humility as we read (open, full of faith). I'm asking that at least one of them will have the courage to declare faith in Christ, and that others will feel free and eager to follow.	With the moms, we are on lesson four of 10. Pray that their hearts will "burn within them" (Luke 24:32) and that their eyes will be opened, such that they run to their husbands and children and declare, "The Lord has risen from the dead" (Luke 24:34).

Intercessory Worship over Your Area

One of the most powerful ways to pray over your map is to intentionally worship God "over" it in song and spoken praise. (If you are meeting in-person, using music is ideal). You might consider laying hands on the area over which you are praying as an added way to provide focus and meaning to your prayer time.

After one person shares the needs and opportunities for their country (area), begin your time of intercessory worship with a short time of worshipful silence.

Worship: Exalt God over their nation, using Psalm 46:10 as fuel: "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations. I am exalted in the earth."

Intercede: Pray for each of the needs and opportunities you wrote down (general and specific) in the exercise above.

Worship: Exalt God over their nation using 1 Chronicles 29:11: "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and yours it is to be exalted as head over all."

Intercede: Pray for one of the needs that has been shared.

Worship: Exalt God over their nation, using 2 Samuel 22:47 and Psalm 47:9: “The Lord lives; blessed be my Rock, and exalted be God, the Rock of my salvation.” . . . “The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.”

Intercede: Pray for one of the opportunities that has been shared.

Worship: Exalt God over their nation, using Psalm 108:5 and Isaiah 2:17: “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.” . . . “The haughtiness of people shall be humbled, and the pride of everyone shall be brought low; and the Lord alone will be exalted on that day.”

Intercede: Pray for one of the opportunities that has been shared.

Worship: Exalt God over their nation, using Isaiah 33:10: “Now I will arise,” says the Lord, “now I will lift myself up; now I will be exalted.”

"I have a plan for the whole earth, for my mighty power reaches throughout the world. The LORD Almighty has spoken—who can change His plans? When His hand moves, who can stop Him?" (Isaiah 14:26-27).

"Take heart. Get up! He is calling you!" (Mark 10:49).

In the middle of the night, Jesus appeared in a dream to a friend (I'll call her Faith) who had recently given her life to Christ. In the dream, she was standing beside Jesus and they were looking at a prison in front of them. Pretty soon she was able to make out the silhouettes of five people behind bars, held in bondage. She couldn't tell who they were, but she knew they wanted and needed to get out. Jesus spoke to her in the dream, saying, "I want you to lead them out of prison."

And then, as clear as if someone was in the room beside her, she heard a call: "Get up and pray!"

She sat up. For a split second, she hesitated. "I never get up at four in the morning! That's crazy," she thought. But the dream was so vivid that she slipped out of her room and went to pray.

Later that day, I was working at my computer when I heard the same call. "Get up. Go to the office!" For a split second, I hesitated, "Uh, I'm focused here. I need to finish this." But the impression was pretty strong. I needed to be at the office. So, I headed out the door.

Faith brought me a tea and settled onto the couch across the room from me in the office. Her heart was full, and she poured out praise to God and told me about her dream. We talked about spiritual bondage, and about how Jesus has freed us. "So, who were those people in prison?" she wondered. I suggested we ask Jesus together. I'd barely said "Amen" when she blurted out, "My brother! My brother is one of them!" And from there, the names of the other four people rolled off her tongue with a certainty that only God could give.

Four of the people she named were family members, but the fifth was a work colleague—the secretary at our office. (I'll call her Longing.) Just as Faith was telling me about her, Longing walked past the glass door! Faith leaped out of her seat and ran after her, calling out with a newfound courage, "Hey, Longing, come and pray with us!" Longing was on the phone and waved to Faith to indicate she couldn't come. Faith popped back in the room, undeterred. She looked at me and laughed, "She's one of the ones I'm to lead out of prison to Jesus!"

Minutes later, much to our delight, Longing poked her head in, "Can I come and pray with you? I'm curious." What followed was a glorious time of testimony. Faith expressed how Jesus had changed her life. I was able to give Longing a Bible and to pray for her. When I finished, Faith jumped in, with a most beautiful prayer. Then she turned to Longing and boldly declared, "God is calling you. Don't you see? We were just talking about you and you walked by at that exact moment. That's God! It's his plan! Now Jesus can change your life, like he's changed mine."

Isn't it wonderful that God has a plan for your region (community)? We don't need to come up with one! No one could ever script things the way God does. His creativity, his timing, his unique way of dealing with each person is amazing. Following his plan is an adventure!

A huge part of worship is a largeness of heart that is alert and open to the creativity and activity of God in our lives. It is as we listen to and act on what we sense (if it lines up with scripture and God's character), we grow in hearing God.

"So pay attention to how you hear. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given" (Luke 8:18). Our Father has a creative solution for every need and opportunity we face. He has a way forward which will not only bring hope but also be a magnet to those around us. He is calling each one of us. So, take heart! Get up! Listen expectantly and reverently.



A PRAYER IDEA

EXALT GOD 'OVER' YOUR COMMUNITY, Part 2

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other's prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Have a second person share one opportunity and one need (general and specific) as per last week's suggestion.

Consider the following from Isaiah 66:18-19: What kind of God would He be to make these kinds of statements? "I'm going to come and gather all nations, all languages. They'll come and see my glory . . . I'll send them out as missionaries to preach my glory among the nations."

Let the answer to the question above fuel your time of worship. Thank God that He has a purpose and a plan to fulfill it. Take out the map from last week and lift up a canopy of praise over the whole region (or community) that you're praying for today.

Listen together: Have you considered that the best place to listen to God is in a group setting where everyone is listening to God about the same subject or need? Take some time to ask God how to pray for one or more of the needs and opportunities shared with you today. After a period of silence, the group can start sharing impressions they received. (Does he bring a verse to mind? A certain idea to pray for? A picture?) After one person shares, see if the others have the same or similar impressions. As you do this, you can come to a consensus of what God has communicated. There is great safety in such communication. As you sense his guidance about how to pray, begin to intercede over the requests shared in the way God leads.

We are coming to the end of our prayer trio time. It's important to circle back to the *why* of worship. There is only one enduring motive that sustains true worship: to get a greater revelation of what he is really like and to grasp the reality that he is worthy!

In Matthew 26, we read about the extravagant worship of the woman who came up to Jesus with an alabaster flask of precious perfume and poured it on his head as he reclined at a table with his disciples. In response to his friends' indignance statement "all this waste," Jesus described what the woman did as "praiseworthy and beautiful." He honored her for doing something to prepare him for his burial. What happened next was in complete juxtaposition to this story.

Immediately Judas got up and went out into the night, straight to the chief priests. He asked them, "What would you be willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" Their response was shocking: "And they weighed out for and paid to him thirty pieces of silver [about twenty-one dollars and sixty cents]" (Matthew 26:15).

How could anyone put a monetary value on the life of the glorious Son of God?

"Then I addressed them: 'Pay me what you think I'm worth.' They paid me an insulting sum, counting out thirty silver coins. God told me, 'Throw it in the poor box.' This stingy wage was all they thought of me and my work!" (Zechariah 11:12-13).

The prophet Zechariah describes the thirty pieces of silver as a "stingy wage," or, in another translation, "munificently miserable." What a contrast to the extravagance of the woman with the precious perfume! One treated Jesus like a king, the other like less than a dog.

Author Dallas Willard once made this poignant observation: "Very few people today find Jesus interesting as a person or of vital relevance to the course of their actual lives. He is not generally regarded as a real-life personality who deals with real-life issues but is thought to be concerned with some feathery realm other than the one we must deal with, and must deal with now. And frankly, he is not taken to be a person of much ability" (*The Divine Conspiracy*).

What about us? How have we grown in our honor of Jesus as an interesting person of vital relevance over the past three months? Is our worship increasingly aligned to the reality of who he is? Is he worthy of all blessing and honor and glory? Is he worthy of this? He is! (See the lyrics from Andrew Peterson's song, "Is He Worthy?").



A PRAYER IDEA

EXALT GOD "OVER" YOUR COMMUNITY, Part 3

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other's prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

Have the third person share one opportunity and one need (general and specific) as per last week's suggestion.

"When he [the Lamb] broke open the seventh seal, there was silence for about half an hour in heaven" (Revelation 8:1).

Begin your time with a moment of silence now and then share how the reflection above moves you.

Join with multitudes of saints and angels described in Revelation 5 to give honor, worth, and glory to Jesus. Take out your map again and like the woman with the alabaster flask, pour out worship over the area of focus today:

“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, ‘To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’”

Repent: An appropriate way to respond to today’s devotional is by praying with the same heart of humility and repentance that Daniel had—for ourselves and on behalf of the people with whom we live and minister. “After learning this, I turned to the Lord God, praying diligently, begging for his mercy, grieving and fasting. . . . I prayed to the Eternal One my God, praising his greatness and confessing our sins” (Daniel 9:3-10).

Intercede: Pray for the needs and opportunities that your friend has shared for their nation or area.

“. . . declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

A wise man once said, “You don’t learn from experience. You learn from reflecting on experience” (Ken Bain). It’s time to look back over our journey and “gather the graces” from the last five weeks. Enjoy your favorite “meal” again!

Week 7: Be joyfully expectant. “As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush . . . so that they were routed” (2 Chronicles 20:22). We saw the incredible power of praise and worship in releasing the miraculous. We were reminded of the importance of nurturing a spirit of expectation, because “it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Week 8: Minister to God. “My sons, do not now be negligent, for the Lord has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him and to be his ministers and make offerings to him” (2 Chronicles 29:11). What an incredible privilege we have as a royal priesthood, to stand before God and bring him delight with our heart-felt worship! In hard times, this is a gift we each uniquely bring to Him this side of heaven. Even our broken worship, when we don’t feel like it but still push through in praise because we believe he is worthy, powerfully touches the nations around us. Let the flame of worship burn with the heat of God’s true worth and the light of missions will shine to the most remote peoples on earth!

Week 9: Speak words of life. “The shock wave of our praise is unaffected by distance, different time zones, or different languages, culture and political systems.” With these words, Dick Eastman reminds us of the incredible privilege and authority we have been given, to speak life over nations and situations by thanking God in front of people, and singing his praises among the nations (Psalm 57:9).

Week 10: Listen for his unfolding plan. What a relief that we don’t have to scheme and strive to come up with plans of salvation or rescue! In Isaiah 14:26-27, we were reminded that God has “a plan for the whole earth.” Our adventurous journey, then, is simply to “pay attention to how you hear” (Luke 8:18). Reverential listening and obeying are beautiful forms of worship that further God’s creative plans and brings hope to all around us.

Week 11: Respond to his worth. We looked at two responses to Jesus in Matthew 26: the woman who “wasted” all she had in extravagant worship, and Judas, who betrayed him for a “stingy wage” of thirty pieces of silver. Put against the backdrop of the epic scenes in Revelation 8 and 5, we were once again reminded of the one enduring motive for our worship: He is worthy!



A PRAYER IDEA

A FINAL PRAYER OF EXAMEN AND CELEBRATION

Reminder: Keep your prayers short and focused. Stick to one subject at a time so that others can agree. Listen to and build on each other’s prayers. Try not to ask for anything during the times of focused worship.

The prayer guide you have just completed was, at its core, a way for us to keep our eyes on Jesus . . . *together*. Take a few moments to praise and thank God for the blessings of beholding God together. Praise him for all answered prayer, and for every movement of your own heart toward him. Use Song of Songs 2:13 as a source of celebration.

“Can you not discern this new day of destiny breaking forth around you? . . . The fragrance of their flowers whisper, ‘There is change in the air.’ Arise, my love, my beautiful companion, and run with me to the higher place. For now is the time to arise and come away with me.”

Have the leader pray Psalm 18:28 over the group: “You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness,” asking God to help us each understand our own individual journeys with God when it comes to worship. Considering the above review, spend a few quiet minutes each prayerfully asking God:

- When did I feel most alive and responsive to God? Which week's devotional brought me noticeable light and why?
- When did I feel less responsive? Why is that?
- Which week's practice do I sense God might want me to go deeper in this week? Why?

Briefly share your thoughts with your trio and then, based on what you shared, pray for one another, asking especially that the blessings of beholding God together will continually overflow into your intercession, causing your prayers from now on to be bigger, bolder, more faith-filled, with a deep sense of joyful expectancy, like spring flowers that whisper, "there is change in the air."