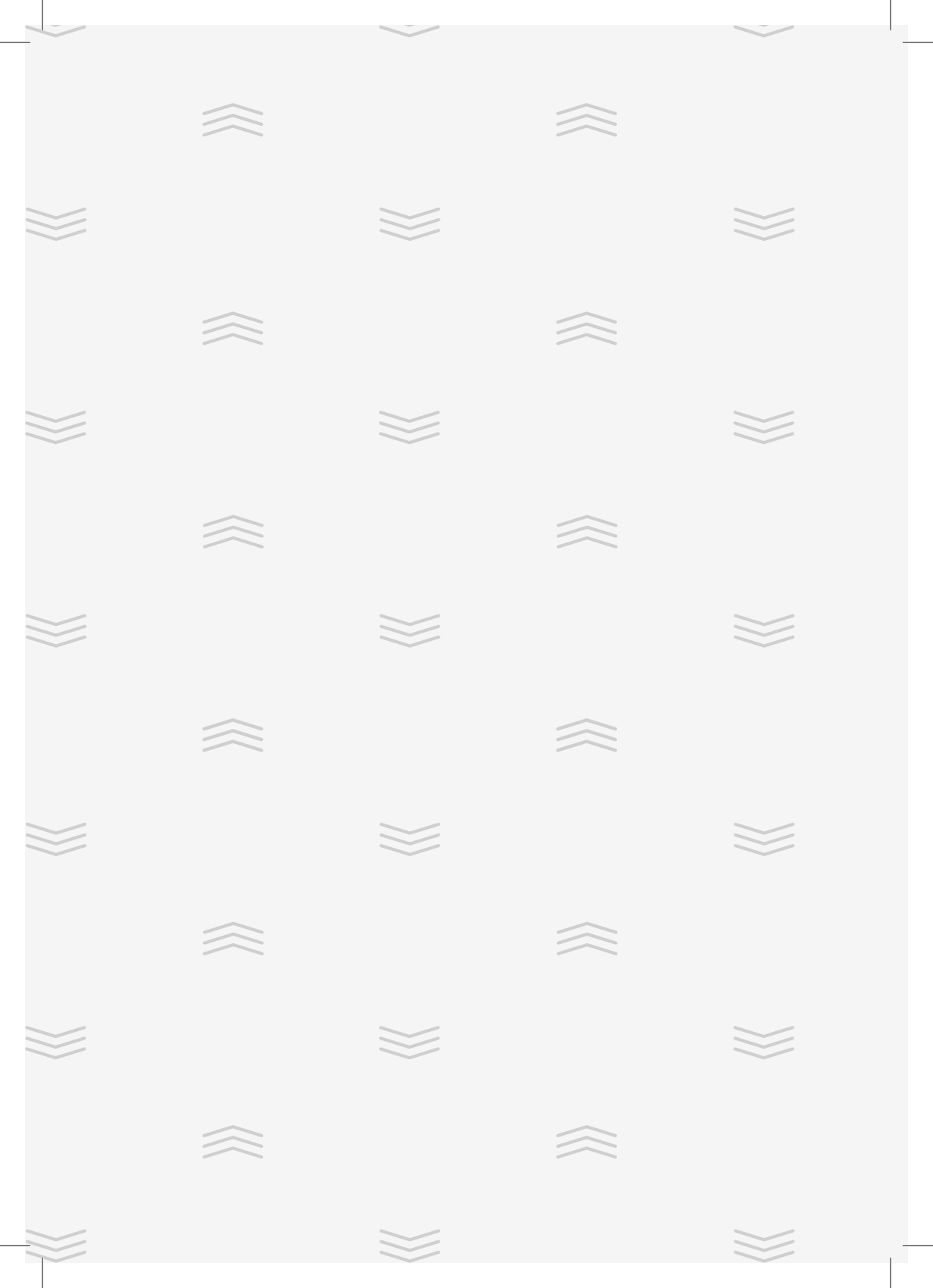




# *Up Close & Personal.*

STUDY GUIDE





# CONTENTS:

## **HOST'S Guide:**

*Before you meet*

*Setting Up*

*How to lead your eGroup and use the study guide*

*Suggested time frames for your group*

*Extras: Keys to a Dynamic eGroup*

**Week One:** *Breaking the Barriers*

**Week Two:** *Why Do We Worship the Way We Do?*

**Week Three:** *Another Level of Worship*

**Week Four:** *Corporate Worship*

# LEADER'S GUIDE:

This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow.

Use this guide, along with the DVDs and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

## **BEFORE YOU MEET:**

Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.

Preview the DVD and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.

## **SETTING UP:**


Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.

Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

## **HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:**

**ENGAGE:** Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the DVD or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

**RECAP:** After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.



**WATCH:** After you have spent some time engaging with each other watch the DVD for the week.

**DISCUSS:** Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

**PRAY:** Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

**ACTIVATE:** As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.





## **SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:**

**ENGAGE:** 15 minutes

**RECAP:** 10 minutes

**WATCH:** 10 minutes

**DISCUSS:** 30 minutes

**PRAY:** 5-10 minutes

**ACTIVATE:** 5 minutes

(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)

## **KEYS TO A DYNAMIC eGROUP**

**Relationships:** Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.


**Availability:** Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

**Mutual Respect:** Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

**Openness:** A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

**Confidentiality:** To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.





**Shared Responsibility:** Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.

**Sensitivity:** Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the “agenda”. This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

**Fun!** Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!



Week One:

## ***BREAKING THE BARRIERS***

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**WATCH:** Watch Session One of the DVD

**DISCUSS:**

*“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.”*

***Romans 12:1***

The way we perceive worship is often based on the way that we have been brought up or on our previous experiences.

**Question: What have been some of the views that you’ve had growing up about worship?**

Many people view worship as only the songs that you sing at church on a Sunday. However, this is not the only way to worship God.

**Question: If worship is not music, what is it?**


Worship is not just for special moments, it is a lifestyle. We worship God because we recognise that he is awesome and want to honour him.

**Question: How would you describe the role that worship plays in your relationship with God currently?**

Often shame, condemnation and negative self-image can prevent us from connecting with God in worship. However, worship is not about our worthiness, it is all about the person of Jesus and what he has done for us.

**Question: Do you identify with any of the things that were mentioned in this session that hinder our intimacy with God in worship?**





Romans 12:1 says that we need to offer our bodies to God in an act of worship. When we put our 'self' to one side, and give ourselves to God, regardless of our imperfections, we are free to focus on what Jesus has done and giving him thanks.

**Question: How does expressing thanks to Jesus for what he has done bring about freedom in our worship?**

**PRAY:** Pray that God would help you identify and lay aside any barriers that are coming between you and God and preventing you from drawing close to him.

**ACTIVATE:** When you are in a time of prayer or worship this week, actively focus of Jesus, thanking him for who he is in your life, and intentionally turn aside from any thoughts that distract you from that focus..



Week Two

# WHY DO WE WORSHIP THE WAY WE DO?

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**RECAP:** Did you notice yourself getting distracted from worshipping God this week, or did you manage to bring your focus back to Jesus and focus on Him in your worship?

**WATCH:** Watch Week Two of the DVD.

**DISCUSS:**

*Come, let us sing to the Lord!  
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come to him with thanksgiving.  
Let us sing psalms of praise to him.  
For the Lord is a great God,  
a great King above all gods."*


**Psalm 95: 1-3**

God taught Moses and the Israelites to worship through acts of obedience to external regulations, so that eventually they would learn to worship internally within their hearts.

**Question: Have you ever chosen to do something externally to honour God, that led you to experiencing an internal connection to God?**

Worship hasn't always involved music. Music was first introduced in the Old Testament when David built a tabernacle for God. David had such a revelation of God's presence and love that he was compelled to offer him songs of praise.

**Question: Why do you think worshipping God through music is so popular?**



Ps Libby likened worship to a romance with God; for many people it can be a time where it is easier to tangibly feel his presence. We don't create atmosphere in worship environments for God - atmosphere is meant to help us focus and open up our hearts to God.

**Question: What are the things that help you to open your heart and feel God's presence in worship?**

When we come into a time of worship with an expectation that we are going to meet with God and connect with his heart, our experience of worship changes.

**Question: What are some ways that we can prepare our hearts, so that when we participate in worship we are expectant and ready to offer worship?**

It's possible to sing worship songs and still not be worshipping God. Rather than relying on a worship leader to prompt us to respond to God's presence, we need our own motivation to draw close to Him in worship.

**Question: How does our daily relationship with God help us to lead ourselves in worship?**

At times, because we can't see Jesus, we can forget that he is present in our lives, everyday, everywhere. We need to be intentional about being aware of and honouring his presence.

**Question: How can you be more intentional about being aware of God's presence in times where it is easy to be distracted?**

**PRAY:** Pray for each other that God would teach you to worship him from a place of relationship and awareness of his presence in your life.

**ACTIVATE:** Consider some ways that you can prepare yourself before you come in to a time of worship at church this week, and how you can begin to lead yourself in worship.



## ***ANOTHER LEVEL OF WORSHIP***

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**RECAP:** Tell each other about your experiences in worship from Sunday. Was anything different this week?

**WATCH:** Watch Week Three of the DVD.

**DISCUSS:**

*So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

### **Hebrews 14:14-16**

Worship is taken to another level when we understand who Jesus really is and what he has done. If Jesus hadn't died and sacrificed his life for us, we would not be able to have the relationship with God that is possible now.


**Question: How important would you say worship is in your life? Why is it meaningful to you?**

The idea that God actually invites us to come into his presence is so important. Many people have a view that they have to be perfect before they can worship God. It is a choice that we need to make regularly, to receive God's love and come close even when we feel unworthy.

**Question: Read the key verse together again - what stands out to you? How does God want us to relate with him in worship?**

Often we don't feel like worshipping God. It is not always easy to push past our feelings and choose to worship him when we are not 'feeling it'.

**Question: What helps you to push past those feelings and choose to connect with God?**



Praise and worship have been designed for different things. Psalm 100:4 tells us that we should “enter his courts with praise.” To praise God is to come boldly into his presence and become aware of the ‘bigness’ of God.

**Question: What is the danger of letting our emotions direct our worship? How does ‘entering with praise’ challenge our emotions and perspective?**

You can have your own time in praise and worship, even when you are not at church. We have to choose to make ourselves aware of his nearness.

**Question: What are some ways that we could incorporate praise and worship into our everyday lives?**

**PRAY:** Pray for each other and ask God to show you ways that you can praise him in your day to day life this week.

**ACTIVATE:** Read some of the Psalms this week and see how many you can find where David is praising God and declaring who he is. Choose one to declare in your times of prayer during the week.



# CORPORATE WORSHIP

**ENGAGE:** Spend time connecting with each other.

**RECAP:** Which Psalm did you find that you used in prayer this week? Why did you choose it?

**WATCH:** Watch Week Four of the DVD.

**DISCUSS:**

*I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt.*

## **Exodus 6:7**

Exodus paints a picture of the early church, where God brought the Israelites out of Egypt to worship Him as one people. He said "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God." God wanted to build an identity around who they were as a people.


**Question: What have you enjoyed about worshiping with other people in a corporate environment?**

Psalm 133 says, 'Where there is unity, God has commanded his blessing.' Unity demands agreement and a giving up of our own preferences.

**Question: Are there times where you have felt resistant to take part in elements of corporate worship? What happened and why did you feel like that?**

God created us to live in community. He wants to speak to his church, not just individuals alone. We all have the same Holy Spirit and he understands what's going on in every person's life - but he also wants to speak to us corporately.

**Question: Have you ever become aware during worship that God was speaking the same thing to you as he was to others at the same time? Why do you think God wants to speak to his church as a whole?**



In the book of Hebrews it tells us not to forsake meeting together, as some people are in the habit of doing. Worshiping and working together corporately challenges us and protects us from making errors in our thinking.

**Question: Has God ever used others in church to teach you something that you couldn't see on your own? What did you learn?**

Worship is not about the songs we like or don't like - it's about our heart for God being expressed. God's desire is that we would learn a way of worship that we can use in our daily lives and have a continual up-close and personal relationship with him.

**Question: What is one thing that you have learnt during this series that will impact the way you worship Jesus the most?**

**PRAY:** Pray for each other that your love for the people of God, as well as your love for God himself, would continue to grow and deepen.













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