

## **Theology of Worship**

### **First Baptist Church of Lacey**

At First Baptist Church of Lacey (FBCL) we believe that worship is an integral part of our gatherings. Worship can be expressed in many different ways, but is primarily expressed through song, prayer, reciting scripture and exposition of God's word.

Here at FBCL we understand that the definition of the word 'worship' is a derivative of the old english word '*weorthscipe*' or worth-ship which is an acknowledgment of worth or the act of ascribing worth to. With this in mind, worship in its very nature, is limited to God Himself as He is the only one who is truly worthy. Worship can be separated into two categories; personal and corporate. Here at FBCL, we believe that our gatherings should consist primarily of corporate worship and we encourage everyone to participate with us.

While we aim to ensure that all aspects of our worship are biblically grounded, we also recognize the value of expressing our worship in ways that resonate with our congregation's cultural and contemporary context. By holding to these principles, it allows us to express our worship in ways that are both reverent and relevant.

#### **Worship Is:**

##### **1. Defined by Scripture**

The form of worship as well as the content of the worship should be theologically correct and should align with our church's statement of faith. The songs we sing should help us to affirm the Trinitarian God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) of the Bible and help us experience the presence of God in His fullness. At FBCL we strive to include both songs that affirm our knowledge about God and His character as well as our personal relationship/response to God. It is important that we let scripture define what an acceptable form of worship is and the content of our worship.

##### **2. God-centered**

Our Worship should keep God as the focal point. All the songs that we sing should help us grow closer to Christ and expand our relationship with Him. Worship is not about us but is about giving God praise and glorifying His name because He is worthy and deserves it. This does not mean that singing songs about our personal response to God are not valid songs of worship, but that we are not the primary focus; God is. Although these songs may be written through our (the worshipper's) perspective, we can still be focused on God and our relationship with Him. This also includes songs about our earthly struggles and songs about desiring to know God more intimately.

### **3. An Offering**

Participation in corporate worship is important. Worshipping God corporately helps us draw closer to Him and helps us to grow as the body of Christ. Our time of worship should always portray the gospel story and provide a time where we can willingly surrender ourselves to the Lord and submit to Christ as the church's head. Our worship should be offered up to God and should stem from a desire to serve and glorify Him. By participating in worship, we are submitting ourselves before God and acknowledging that only God (Father, Spirit and Son) are worthy of praise. Both the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) words that are translated as "worship" in our Bibles literally mean to lay down or prostrate oneself in reverence. This is an act of submitting to God's will and acknowledging His supreme kingship in our lives.

### **4. Evangelistic**

Our church mission statement is: to glorify God in all things and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity, conviction, and compassion. With our mission statement in mind, worship at FBCL should be evangelistic in nature and be a proclamation of the Gospel. We believe that our corporate worship time should be a time to personally set our minds on Christ and should help lead us in submission to Him. Whether you are a regular member of FBCL, a first time visitor from a different church home or someone who has not yet committed their life to Christ our worship should reveal God in his fullness as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is important to us that the full Gospel message is presented during our worship services through the songs that we sing, scripture, prayer, ordinances (Baptism and communion/Lord's Supper) and the exposition of God's word. This ensures that anybody from any walk of life can enter into our church and be presented with the full gospel of Jesus Christ and offered God's free gift of salvation.

### **5. Inclusive, not Exclusive**

We believe that all people should be able to join us in worship and feel comfortable regardless of cultural or generational differences. This is why we have developed a blended worship style. A blended worship style means that we provide different genres and styles of worship so that our church can be welcoming to those from different generations and diverse backgrounds. A blended worship style helps bridge the generational and cultural difference within our congregation by combining the old with the new and multiple different musical styles.

## **6. Not Just Music**

It is important to understand that music is not the only form of worship. Our worship needs to extend from our hearts into the church body and is an integral part of who we are as a church. Acts of worship include but are not limited to reading scripture, praying, music, singing, preaching, observing the Lord's Supper, observing baptism, fellowshiping together. We at FBCL acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is actively working through His people. Each person will respond to the Spirit in different ways. Some of these responses include but are not limited to the raising of hands, praying, singing, kneeling, and overwhelming emotion such as joy or crying. While we understand that the Spirit may invoke emotion during worship, we also recognize that the Spirit of God will do so in an orderly fashion that leads us to Himself in a biblical way and that our response to worship should exemplify the fruit of the Spirit which includes that of self-control.