



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

March 24, 2019

### Blended Worship

*Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! —Psalm 150:3-6*

When the leadership first introduced drums into our worship, they did it very carefully. We had a choir and a praise band, but drums were suspect. But we had this one law enforcement officer with a talent for drums, a sensitivity to the situation, and—above all—a love for the Lord.

He played quietly at first—from behind the piano. Gradually, what he added had an effect on our worship. Extra energy, a well-timed accent, an added emphasis on a pointed truth, all combined to connect our hearts and minds on the Object of our praise. Even now, drums don't define our worship. They add a new dimension—another way to proclaim how great our God is.

When I was a child, missionaries from Africa, Indonesia, or the Amazon jungles returned from remote tribes where witch doctors ruled and demons were worshipped to the ominous sound of drums. So much has changed! Churches have been established, and whole nations have been saved. African rhythms now accent worship that celebrates the God who brought eternal light to the “Dark Continent.”

We dare not overlook what was Africa's chief export. Europeans and Muslims made sure that slavery turned a profit, as they gathered human capital for sale in the Americas. For centuries, the vicious greed of Christian cultures enslaved millions of Africans, who sang their sorrows to deeply melancholy tunes. But even in bondage, the Gospel of Jesus Christ brought them hope and eternal salvation. Their songs sang that hope and the glory of their Redeemer.

And we sing them in our worship today. Few experiences reflect the misery brought by human depravity, or God's power to redeem from any circumstance, quite like the history of American slavery. Few songs stir hearts as deeply as the gospel music forged in the furnace of the affliction of American slaves.

A thousand years after intrepid missionaries brought the Gospel to wild tribes of Franks, Angles, Goths, and Celts, their European descendants developed complex musical instruments, and new musical genres and employed them to praise the God who delivered them from barbarism, destruction, and slavery to their passions. The highest and most enduring musical creations are not the product of European civilization at its height. They sprang from redeemed souls, praising the Christ the Savior.

Arguments about choirs versus praise bands, divisions over musical styles and preferences take the Church backward. They force our eyes away from our Great Redeemer and turn them inward, onto what we find pleasing as individuals. Worship is not about what pleases us. It's about what honors God.

Worship tells how great God is and proclaims the great things He has done. And God has done so much, for so many people, so many times. Formal, high music proclaims God's excellencies and tells of His eternal greatness. Casual praise music speaks from the heart and tells of His intimate love from personal experience. Ethnic tunes and songs of diverse cultures open our hearts to the breadth of the God who loves the world. Solos give individual testimony. Choirs express corporate praise and our identity together in Christ.

Our ambition in worship is excellence, but not for its own sake. Our goal is variety, but not to prevent boredom. Worship is all about God. It shares the exuberance of the One who journeyed from heaven to earth and from life to death, so He could save a people He determined to make His own. Worship in all its variety celebrates the God who embraced the wide world in His love and bought us with His blood.

*So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:8).*

To the praise of God's glory

## True Worship

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? —James 4:1*

Passion is a gift from God, and passion is powerful. We must always be on our guard to have God as the Master of our lives and our passions. Worship engages our passions, unites them with our understanding, and directs them both toward God. Ask God earnestly to be the Lord of our passions in worship, because worship drives and directs our lives. When our lips praise God from the heart, our lives will follow. And it is essential to keep our eyes and hearts focused on God and not ourselves.

The joy of life is worship focused on God. The great peril of life is worship focused on anything but God—including ourselves and our worship. Ask God to focus worship at Northpoint on Himself and to deliver us from self-centered worship. It's the difference between life and death, between heaven and hell.

Ask God to search your heart as an individual and make your worship entirely Christ centered. Pray also for Northpoint as a local body of believers. Ask God to do the same cleansing work in us and in our leaders.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

### Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ... saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." —Revelation 7:9, 12*