

STEP 1: KNOW GOD
CONNECT
COURSE

Rise City Church

1305 Middlefield Rd. Redwood City CA 94063

risecitybayarea.com

650.368.3821

OUR MISSION:

**DISCIPLE THE ONE
RAISE UP THE CITY
REACH THE NATIONS
WITH GOD'S LOVE &
TRANSFORMING
PRESENCE.**

CONNECTING IN 3 STEPS

STEP 1

Know God

STEP 2

Join the Army

STEP 3

Make a Difference



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1. SALVATION

We believe every person can have restored fellowship with God through salvation, and the acceptance of Christ's offer to forgive sin. This is a gift we receive through repentance, belief in Jesus, and receiving Him as Lord and Savior for the rest of our life. We are adopted into His family, co-heirs with Christ. We believe in the power of your confession, declaring Jesus is Lord!

"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" - Romans 10:9-10

Based on the above verse we know that when we live out the items below we will spend eternity in heaven, receiving salvation and the inheritance of His everlasting Kingdom:

Believe that Jesus died to pay for our sins (Rom 3:23-24)

Repent and ask for forgiveness of sins (Rom 10:9-10; 1 John 1:9)

Surrender to Christ's leading and lordship in your life (Luke 9:23)

Receive God's free- gift of salvation (Rom 6:23; Rom 10:13)

REPENTANCE

Repentance is not merely conviction of sin or sorrow for sin. It is quite the mistake to suppose that you are being repentant when you are in fact not. Someone could be convicted or sorrowful, yet still miss out on true freedom found through repentance. What is repentance then? It's simply renouncing sin, turning from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. This means giving up sin in your heart, in purpose, in desire. Choosing to give up every evil thing, immediately. Repentance must be marked with action, a complete turning from your sin. Many people confuse repentance with a feeling of remorse. Repentance is often accompanied by feelings of remorse or even sadness but without the decision to change or amend direction, it is incomplete.

Renounce: To disown; to disclaim; to reject; as a title or claim; to refuse to own or acknowledge as belonging to; to renounce a title; To deny; cast off; to disclaim; to renounce allegiance.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. - 2 Peter 3:9

JUSTIFICATION & SANCTIFICATION

We are justified by faith through Christ. What does that mean? Simply put, our faith in God is what makes us righteous (*2 Corinthians 5:21*). He has made a way for us to be free from sin and to walk rightly with the Lord. But it is only through His grace and the working of a Holy God that this is possible. Being justified doesn't make us holy, but it simply declares us as *not guilty*. Justification is made possible by the blood of Jesus. It is both a free and gracious gift of God given to those who receive in faith the sacrifice that Jesus made. Praise God we are moved from sinner to saint, from unrighteous to righteous through the grace of Christ.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. - Romans 5:1-2

Justification is something that God does for us, while sanctification is what God does with us. The generic meaning of sanctification is “the state of proper functioning.” To be sanctified is to be set apart for a specific use. The biblical definition of sanctification is “to make holy.” Someone cannot sanctify themselves, it is only in walking closely with the Lord that sanctification can truly take place. Sanctification is an ongoing and progressive work in our lives. Although every believer is brought out once and for all from bondage to sin, we are not immediately made perfect. We will not be completely freed from sin until we receive our resurrection bodies on the last day.

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified...” - 1 Thessalonians 4:3

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. - 1 Thessalonians 5:23



2. PRAYER

What is prayer?

Prayer is having fellowship with God. Just like God spent time with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He desires to have communion with us every day. Prayer is not one-sided, it is a conversation which means both parties participate in conversing with one another. In other words, prayer is not just speaking but also listening.

How do I pray?

God wants us to pray and talk with Him in our everyday manner just as we would to anyone we love. Just as a son or daughter would talk to their father and ask him for things (with no predisposition of difficulty) we should also go to Him as children (James 4:2; Psalm 34:15,17; Matt 18:3-4). Resist the desire to muster up pretentious prayers – God wants to be in a relationship with the real you!

Who should I pray to?

When making petitions to God, scripture is clear that we are to simply ask the Father in Jesus' name. We are grateful that it is because of Jesus that we have access and permission to ask the Father. (John 16:23-24)

Will all my prayers be answered?

We should feel comfortable enough to ask our Father for anything because the scriptures say He gives us the “desires of our heart” (Ps 20:4). But in relationship with our Father, we should align our heart with His (1 John 5:14-15) upfront to avoid asking amiss or with wrong motives in which case we will not receive what we ask for. (James 4:3)



HOW TO P.R.A.Y.

One of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray!”

PAUSE

Slowing & Centering: *“Be still and know that I am God.” - Psalm 46:10*

REJOICE

Adoration & Thanksgiving: *“Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!” - Philippians 4:4*

ASK

Petition, Intercession, & Perseverance: *“Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.” - Matthew 6:10*

YIELD

Contemplation, Listening, Confession, & Spiritual Warfare: *“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. - Romans 12:1*

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO ME?

As we continue to develop and tune our spirits to hear His voice it is vital that we have a contextual understanding of how God has spoken to people throughout history. We find this history within the Bible. There are many examples of God communicating with His people but we will look at a few. Remember that these are certainly not the only ways He speaks to us. He is God and therefore far more creative in communication than we fully understand. (John 10:27)

- **Read the word regularly:** Scripture indicates that Jesus is the personification of the Word (The Bible) therefore if we are to know God we must know the scriptures. We cannot know the One without the other. God will not speak something to you that contradicts His Word. (John 1:14)
- **People:** God often chooses to speak through people. In the Bible, He used prophets to speak to His people, and to this day He still uses people to speak to us. It is important to test every word someone gives you in the name of the Lord against the scriptures as many have gone astray by not discerning the spirit in which someone speaks to them. (1 John 4:1-3)

- **Through His Spirit:** Once you have become familiar with the Bible it will be easier to understand when you feel an “inner prompting” from the Holy Spirit because it will never contradict what the Bible teaches you. (John 14:26)
- **Fasting:** In Matthew Chapter 4 Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He had been fasting 40 days and 40 nights and the Bible says that he was hungry. Satan thought that this would be the perfect moment to undermine Jesus. But fasting had made Jesus fit for the fight. In this moment of temptation, Jesus stands up to Satan and reminds him what the Word of God says. Fasting isn’t about giving up something, it’s about redirecting your appetite and repositioning your spirit. When you fast, you commune with the Father, it’s a shifting of your focus. Fasting reminds us of our position in Christ and decreases our selfish desires and desire for self-promotion. As your spiritual appetite changes, you can hear the Lord more clearly, and as a result, a breakthrough happens. Often people fast prior to making big decisions, for healing, to draw closer to God, for overall breakthrough in their life, or for people around them.

TIPS ON HOW TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY PRAYER LIFE:

- **Discipline:** Developing a prayer life takes discipline. Your flesh seldom will desire to do spiritual things. Ultimately it will fall on your decision to choose Him daily and whether you long to be intimate with God at your own personal cost. (Rom 12:12, Col 4:2)
- **Find your closet:** Find a space or time where/when you know you would be focused on prayer, without your phone and all your attention on God. (Matt 6:6)



- **Choose a time:** It can be extremely helpful to predetermine a time to pray because we live in such a busy age it is often prayer that falls to the bottom of the priority list. Choose a time that you know will allow you to focus on God. (Psalm 5:3)
- **Prayer Journal:** In Psalm 86 we see David pray and as a result of him journaling this prayer we reap the benefits of this powerful and honest moment in his walk with God. Journaling has many benefits. We should not only try to journal our prayers to God but also His response to us as we understand it. This often acts as altars of remembrance for days, months, and even years later of His faithfulness and goodness toward us.
- **Pray in the Holy Spirit:** Sometimes it can feel as though we “hit a wall” when it comes to prayer, in this scenario it is helpful to pray in the Holy Spirit as the Spirit intercedes on our behalf. (Rom 8:26)
- **Read the Bible:** As previously mentioned it’s important to allow God the time to respond to our prayers. The easiest way to hear Him is through His Word. During prayer, it is important to spend some of this time in His word as your answers may be right there within those pages!

3. OUR BELIEFS CONTINUED...

THE BIBLE

We believe the scriptures in the Bible are inspired by God and declare His design and plan for mankind. His Word is still relevant, cannot be changed, and should be the source of our instruction and doctrine. It is through the Bible that believers are equipped for every good work.

“And how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:15-17

1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Peter 1:21

GOD THE FATHER, SON, & HOLY SPIRIT

We believe there is only One True God revealed in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This can also be referred to as the Trinity. All throughout scripture we can read of God in each of these distinctive ways. God the Father is the Creator of all things, He is the beginning, middle, and end. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. As God's Son He was both human and divine. His death and resurrection was the greatest act of love the world would ever know. We believe that the Holy Spirit is God. He is meant to be active in the life of every believer. He empowers us to serve, minister, and be cleansed daily.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. - Matthew 28:19

John 1:1-14, John 3:16, Galatians 4:1-7, Luke 11:13, 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11, Acts 2:1-18

THE FALL OF MAN

Man was created good and upright; for God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26,27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

WATER BAPTISM

We believe and practice the ordinance of water Baptism by immersion after repenting of one's sins and receiving Christ's gift of salvation.

● What is Water Baptism?

Our English word Baptism comes from the Greek word *Baptizo* which means to dip, immerse or overwhelm, to cover wholly and entirely with fluid. We could view baptism as though we were attending our own funeral service since we no longer choose our will as the final authority over our life but God is made manifest through us. We are new creatures, the old has passed away. Water baptism is an outward testimony to the world. It is an outward declaration of an inward transformation. By this act of obedience, you are saying that you are finished with your old life and that you are now living an entirely new life for Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:3-6)



● Why do I need to be baptized?

Jesus was baptized and set the example for us (Matthew 3:13-17; Romans 6:4). God instructs us to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son & Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

● Is there anything I need to do before I can get baptized?

Believe that Jesus is the Savior and that He died for your sins (Romans 10:9, Acts 8:35 - 39)

● What if I don't "feel ready" to be baptized?

It is important to count the cost of following Jesus into a life of surrender however we must remember that God is not expecting perfection to flow from your life from the day of your baptism. God is aware of our limitations, weaknesses, and shortcomings. He is more interested in the attitude of our hearts concerning this act. (1 Samuel 16:7). One of the biggest challenges as a Christian is to receive

God's forgiveness. When you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you are washed clean of all your sins but you must believe this. Being baptized is the way we declare outwardly that we truly believe we are free. (Psalm 103:12)

COMMUNION

We believe and practice the ordinance of Holy Communion as a symbolic remembrance of Christ's suffering and death for our salvation. There is power in His body that was broken, and His blood that was shed for our sins. As the body of Christ, it is vital that we remember the cross, constantly in awe of the sacrifice and victory we have in Jesus.

*“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”
In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”
For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as experienced in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost and throughout the New Testament. To understand the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we must first look deeper at what the Bible tells us about the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead and is as much God as the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son. The Holy Spirit is not just a mere influence or attitude – He is truly God, a divine Person. To the Christian, He is our Comforter, Helper, Intercessor, and Advocate on earth. In Greek, the word is *paraclete* – which means advocate or helper. It is important to note that Jesus only began His public ministry once the Holy Spirit had come upon Him at His water baptism. (John 1:32)

Do I need the Holy Spirit?

“The Spirit-filled life is not a deluxe edition of Christianity, it is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.” - AW Tozer

*“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him”
-Acts 10:38*

If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, needed the Holy Spirit to minister, how much more do we need Him? Christ's ministry on earth must continue through **Spirit-filled Christians** as it's only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can see His kingdom made manifest through our lives.

“BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU AND YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES.”

- ACTS 1:8

“VERY TRULY I TELL YOU, WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME (JESUS) WILL DO THE WORKS I HAVE BEEN DOING, AND THEY WILL DO EVEN GREATER THINGS THAN THESE BECAUSE I AM GOING TO THE FATHER.”

- JOHN 14:12

“BUT I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT IS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE THAT I GO AWAY, FOR IF I DO NOT GO AWAY, THE HELPER (HOLY SPIRIT) SHALL NOT COME TO YOU; BUT IF I GO, I WILL SEND HIM TO YOU.”

- JOHN 16:7

What does it mean to be baptized by the Holy Spirit?

All believers in Jesus Christ have God's Spirit living within them, or dwelling within them (John 14:16, Ephesians 1:13, 2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 4:30); but not all believers seek to be baptized by the Spirit.

In John 7:37-39 Jesus describes “rivers of living water shall flow from our innermost being.” We know He was referring to the Holy Spirit because verse 39 says, “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive...” The Holy Spirit is like a river, **constantly** flowing and moving.

Holy Spirit at Pentecost + Speaking in Tongues:

At Pentecost in Acts 2 is when the Holy Spirit makes a grand entrance. Acts 2:4 “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” The apostles, a group of 120 believers, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (Acts 1:12-15) joined together in prayer. Suddenly in chapter 2, we read that wind blew through the upper room where they gathered and tongues of fire came to rest on each of them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues. The tongues they were speaking were native languages. Galileans began speaking in languages native to Parthians, Medes,

Elamites, and so on. This was fascinating because there was no way they could normally speak these languages, people were astonished. They said in Acts 2:11 “We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

We read in Scripture that Holy Spirit baptism can occur in two different kinds of tongues - One of the tongues is what we see happen at Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit gives a tongue that is a native language. For instance, if God suddenly gives someone who only speaks English the tongue to speak in French or Spanish a language they did not previously speak, this would be an example of what happened at Pentecost. The second type of tongue is a heavenly tongue which is referred to many times in scripture. In 1 Corinthians 13:1, this tongue is referred to as a “tongue of angels.” It later goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 14:2, “For anyone that speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them, they utter mysteries by the Spirit.” This type of tongue is referred to as a **mystery**.



Tongues are meant to edify the believer and to edify the church. As tongues are spoken they should strengthen, encourage, and comfort the body (1 Corinthians 14:3). Tongues spoken just to yourself will always edify you personally, which we read in 1 Corinthians 14:4 when Paul writes, “Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves...” Paul later writes in 1 Corinthians 14:18-19, “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church, I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.” What good is a gift that doesn’t build up the church? Tongues should have a purpose, and the purpose should always be to edify **Either yourself or the church**. When you do receive this gift, use it! Sometimes if you don’t know how to pray, simply pray in the Spirit. Often God will lead you in a direction to pray. Tongues are a beautiful gift that enables us to connect with the spirit in such a powerful way.

It is also important to note that while the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for today and to be active in the body of Christ, we must firmly grasp the importance and foundation of the **Fruit of the Holy Spirit**. It is quite a mistake to operate in gifts but not know how to operate in love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

How do I get baptized in the Holy Spirit?

All we must do is ask. (Luke 11:9-13). Like any other gift, we simply ask to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. But don't be discouraged if it doesn't happen right that second. Remember that God's timing is perfect and His Spirit and power are in you because you are His child.

THE CHURCH

We believe the Church has a mission to seek and save the lost and to make disciples of all nations as commanded in the Great Commission in Matthew 28. The church is comprised of many parts that make one body. Each person is an integral part of the Church and the body of believers. There is a spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:22, Matthew 28:16-20, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

HEALING

We believe in divine healing, which was provided through the atonement, the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. Miracles are not just for the Bible but are for today.

Matthew 8:16-17, Isaiah 53:4 & 5, James 5:14-16



SECOND COMING, MILLENNIAL REIGN, FINAL JUDGEMENT

We believe the Lord is returning. The saints will be resurrected, He will begin his millennial reign, and a final judgment will take place. Then, the eternal status of all will be determined based on our relationship with Christ. We look forward to the perfect New Heavens and New Earth that Christ has prepared for His people.

Revelation 1:7, Acts 1:10-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, James 5:8, John 14:2-4, John 5:24-30, Jude 5-7, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15

MINISTRY

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20), (2) worship of God (John 4:23,24), (3) building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11,16), and (4) Meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion (Psalms 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

MARRIAGE

We believe marriage is defined in the Bible as a covenant, a sacred bond between one man and one woman, instituted by and publicly entered into before God.

Matthew 19:4-6, Genesis 2:18-25

RESURRECTION:

We believe that Jesus Christ was physically resurrected from the dead in a glorified body on the third day after His death on the cross.

Luke 24:16, 36, 39; John 2:19-21, 20:26-28, Acts 24:15, Philippians 1:21-23

LIFE IS SACRED:

We believe every life is sacred and every life begins at conception. He has knit us together in our mother's womb, His eyes saw us before we were formed.

Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 139:13-16, Proverbs 24:11-12

EVERY TRIBE & NATION:

We believe that the family of God includes every tribe, nation, and tongue. Diversity in the church is beautiful and it is how God designed it to be. Every man and woman are equally created in His image.

Revelation 7:9-10, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

PRAISE & WORSHIP

We believe that we were made to worship God in Spirit and in truth. He is always worthy of our worship. Our circumstances don't dictate how or when we worship. We are dedicated to maintaining a lifestyle of extravagant worship at the feet of Jesus daily.

Definition of Praise "Halal" is the most common word for praise. This word simply means to boast, brag, or rave about God even to the point of appearing foolish. "Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise (halal) you as long as I live..." (Psalm 63:3-4).



Definition of Worship The Hebrew word "shachah" and the Greek word "proskuneo" account for more than 80% of the appearances of the word "worship" in most English versions of the Bible.

A study of the Hebrew word shachah and the Greek word proskuneo reveals that both these words mean "to bow down." Proskuneo literally means to kiss the hand of someone as a token of reverence and to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence. We were made to worship in this way, always in reverence and realization of the position of the Father. He is good, and we can worship Him in every season.

Worship is not about us, it's all about Him. We don't worship to get something, we worship to give something. We worship to give him our hearts, to adore and praise Him. God does not desire us to demonstrate outwardly what we do not feel inward. Our praise and worship should reflect the love & adoration we have for God within us. God does not enjoy it when people offer false worship or disingenuous praise.



Is Praise & Worship important?

As we draw near to Him in reverence & love He encounters us and it is impossible to encounter God and be unchanged. During worship, we are intimate with the Lord (James 4:8) and this is where many people experience God in the most powerful way. In Acts 16:22-26 Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. During their time there, they began to praise and worship the Lord the prisoners around them heard this and because of Paul & Silas's unashamed and sacrificial worship the prison was shaken and everyone's chains were loosed! Some people are a worship encounter away from the breakthrough they have been waiting for. Your worship could also be the catalyst for someone else's freedom.

How should I worship?

Praise and Worship begins in our hearts and often overflows into our physical expression. The examples and definitions within the Bible confirm that we are to outwardly express an inward heart posture during times of praise and worship. There are many expressions of praise and worship and we shouldn't limit our worship to just Sunday mornings but we should develop a lifestyle of praise and worship whereby our hearts are constantly exalting Him which will reflect in our actions. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:24

Some expressions are as follows:

- Clapping: Psalm 47:1
- Lifting Holy Hands: 1 Timothy 2:8
- Singing: Acts 16:25
- Sacrifice: Hebrews 13:15
- From your Heart & Soul: Psalm 103:1-2
- Falling down: Rev 19:4
- Speaking: Rev 5:13/Rev 4:8
- Instruments: Psalm 150:3-5
- Cry out: Revelation 7:10
- Corporately: Revelation 5:11

How should I worship?

We must be careful not to pick and choose our personal expressions of worship. Keep in mind that worship is for God and the truly worshipful person will focus more on the object of our praise than the expression thereof.

Access to His Presence:

Jesus shifted worship. In the Old Testament, we find that worship consisted of giving a sacrifice, you had to physically give a blood offering in the form of a goat, a lamb, or some type of animal. In fact, the first time the word worship is used in the Bible is in the story of Abraham and his son Isaac (Genesis 22). From the beginning, worship has been about offering a sacrifice of praise, and we see that happen when Abraham gives Isaac to the Father. Jesus changed worship when he put himself on the altar. His death on a cross would cover us with his blood forever. This is the greatest act of worship ever recorded in history. When Jesus died, the Bible says that the veil in the Temple was torn. The Holy of Holies, this sacred presence of the Lord was made available to us through Christ (Matthew 27:51, Hebrews 9). As followers of Christ, we have full access to the presence of God. It is important to not take His presence for granted. When His children come together in unity to worship, there are no limits to what God can do. God wants us to be in His presence as individuals, but corporately as well. It is in unity that we see God move mightier than ever before, His glory fills the room.

Glory of God

- The radiant outshining of His character and presence.
- The glory of God is used in a variety of ways in Scripture. It can refer to God's greatness, His honor, His beauty, His power, and His light (Isaiah 60:1). In every case, the glory of God acknowledges the Lord's supreme strength and our need to both acknowledge and serve Him.
- You were created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7).
- The Glory of God often manifests itself in scripture as a cloud, a cloud of His glory. (2 Chronicles 5:11-14)

- The extreme presence of the glory of God makes our normal, routine church service impossible. The best “services” are the ones where God takes over.
- Shekinah Glory is the Hebrew word meaning “dwelling” or “settling” of the divine presence of God.

Suggestions for Praise & Worship Music

- Maverick City Music, Hillsong, Bethel Music, Tasha Cobbs, Israel Houghton, Elevation Worship, UpperRoom, Housefires, Bryan & Katie Torwalt, Jesus Culture, SEU Worship, Kari Jobe, Jonathan McReynolds, ZOE Worship, All Sons & Daughters, Tauren Wells, Shane & Shane

GIVING:

We believe in giving God our tithe faithfully in every season. Biblical giving is related to finances but also involves our time, resources, and anything else the Lord would bring to our attention. The very nature of God reflects **extravagant** giving. We see this nature demonstrated in the way He created Adam & Eve, freely giving them the land to take authority over. Jesus was God’s tithe, He gave His first and His best. When we give from a pure heart we reflect the very nature of our Father. We want to be obedient to His Word and live a generous lifestyle.

Tithe:

The tithe or “first fruits” of our labor and income belong to God. We find this principle all through God’s Word. Tithing, giving God the first 10% of our income to the local church is the primary, practical way we acknowledge God as first. (Proverbs 3:9-10) Tithing was a spiritual principle practiced BEFORE the Old Testament law by people such as Abraham and Jacob. (Genesis 14:18-20, Genesis 28:20-22) In bringing the first tenth of their income to the church (Malachi 3:10-12) they demonstrated outwardly that their trust was in the Lord and not in riches. In Matthew 23:23 Jesus confirms that we are to tithe however He emphasizes that justice, mercy, and faith carry more weight in the kingdom and shouldn’t be set aside because of a false sense of holiness we may carry due to tithing faithfully but not exercising God’s character in our lives.

Offerings:

An offering is giving over and above the tithe. You aren’t really living unless you are freely giving. (1 Timothy 6:18-19)

The Gift of Giving:

The gift of giving is a spiritual gift that God gives to some people. (Romans 12:8). It is a Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by giving of your material resources, far beyond the tithe, to further the work of God. The giving of tithes and offerings is worship to Jesus and an expression of the relationship between the individual giver and the Lord. Funds are not “income only” they are worship and are not considered to be a business transaction, but an expression of gratitude toward God.

The Law of Sowing and Reaping

- Sowing and reaping is an eternal principle set from the very start (Genesis 8:22).
- It's a principle that doesn't involve only money, but can be applied to every aspect of our life (Galatians 6:7,9)
- Sowing is giving from the stock that we have and as a result, we will reap something more. But it starts by giving from what you have without the driving motive of “giving to get” but rather “giving to glorify”. (Mark 12:41-44)

What if I can't afford to tithe or give?

When we choose to live a life of faith in Jesus Christ the question we will face daily will be; “Where do I put my trust?” Our decisions should reflect faith in God's Word. If this is true of us, then our obedience will reflect that. (James 1:21-22, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 9:7)

If God has priority over your harvest He has priority over your heart. God is looking at our hearts when we give, He must be first. (Cain & Abel)

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:21
“Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.” – Exodus 23:19

When we put God first the rest of the harvest is blessed and redeemed:

- Pass down the principle of first for future generations to be blessed and redeemed.
- “God doesn't need you to give, you need to be blessed” – Pastor Robert Morris

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. – Proverbs 3:9-10

We should put God first before anything else:

- Before your bills, before grocery shopping, before shop therapy He must be first every time.
- Some of us aren't willing to give God our first because we don't know if we will have enough.
- Some of us aren't even willing to give God our last because then we will have nothing left.

*We hope that God would create in you a Spirit of generosity.
We pray you would steward well all that He has given and entrusted to you.*

NEXT STEPS

- COMPLETE STEP 1 FORM
- START A BIBLE READING PLAN USING THE BIBLE APP
 - SUGGESTED PLAN: THE BIBLE PROJECT, BIBLE IN A YEAR PLAN
- SIGN UP ONLINE TO BE BAPTIZED
- COMPLETE ALL 3 STEPS OF CONNECT COURSE
 - STEP 1: KNOW GOD
 - STEP 2: JOIN THE ARMY
 - STEP 3: MAKE A DIFFERENCE