



WORSHIP CHANGES LIVES

Supporting Resources

INTRODUCTION

Worship Changes Lives is a non-technical book about liturgy – and in particular about how the experience of taking part in worship can change us as we meet with God and are transformed by that encounter. It is not primarily a book for liturgists – those who take a technical interest in the study of the subject - but for ‘the Christian in the pew’ – the worshipper who wants to explore and expand his/her understanding of worship and think further about the place worship has within the life of a missionary Church.

It had been written by members of the Church of England Liturgical Commission, edited for the Commission by Paul Bradshaw and Peter Moger, and is offered to the church as part of the *Transforming Worship* initiative.

It is our hope that worship-planning groups, PCCs, church study groups, home groups, ministry teams, readers, intercessors, musicians..., in fact anyone who takes part regularly in worship, will find the book helpful, as a means of widening their horizons on worship.

How the book is structured

Worship Changes Lives is in four sections:

- Basics
- Belonging
- Becoming
- Believing

These headings reflect the view of some that, in coming to faith, many people come to 'belong' to a worshipping community before they would claim to be 'believers'. The process of growth in faith and discipleship is very much one of 'becoming' – something given liturgical expression in the *Rites on the Way* material in *Common Worship*. It is hoped that this structure will provide a helpful route through the material. Some subjects (e.g. Baptism, Holy Communion) appear in *Worship Changes Lives* more than once. Each time, they receive a slightly different emphasis.

How the supporting material is structured

To help readers to get the most out of *Worship Changes Lives*, we have prepared some additional material with discussion questions. This is available to download as a series of pdfs from the Liturgical Commission's *Transforming Worship* website

www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page_id=140

For each of the book's short chapters, the supporting material is set out as follows:

- Some **additional texts** (e.g. liturgical texts, hymn/song words) which relate to the theme of the chapter
- An **introductory paragraph** setting out one particular 'way in' to the subject
- Three sets of questions

(1) *Looking AT*

These questions encourage reflection on the current situation in the local church.

(2) *Looking IN*

These invite the reader to reflect on the subject from personal experience.

(3) *Looking OUT*

These questions link the worshipping practice of the local church with its mission – and might lead to a discussion about changing the way we worship.

- Some **suggestions** for further reading or reflection entitled *Looking Deeper*

In each case, the supporting material and questions tend to focus on one particular element of the subject under discussion. For example, in 'You are what you eat' there is an emphasis on the issue of the admission of baptised children to Holy Communion. The questions and resources are not intended in any way to be exhaustive – but are offered as a 'way in' which we hope will generate a thirst for further exploration.

In the *Basics* section, the supporting material is more general, and covers only 4 of the chapters (Hard-wired for worship? – Words – Actions Speak Louder – Remembrance).

Using the book with the supporting material

Worship Changes Lives may be used in a variety of ways.

1. Individuals

It may be read by individuals, using the questions in the supporting material as a means of personal reflection on each of the chapters.

2. Groups

We anticipate, though, that most readers will use the book as part of a small group. This might be a study group (home group / cell group), a worship planning group, a PCC, a ministry team, a group of intercessors / lesson readers / musicians / servers.

The following pattern is given as a guide as to how the book might be studied over a time-span of 6 weeks, though there is a need for flexibility. Some groups will find that some subjects will generate more discussion than others, and time might need to be allowed for that. Some might find that the material in *Basics* is easily covered in one week. Others might feel that more time is needed.

Week 1

BASICS

- Headlines
- Hard-wired for worship
- God meets us
- Words

- Actions speak louder
- Remembrance

Week 2

BELONGING

- Church and worship
- Holy places?
- Scripture
- Putting on Christ
- Feeding on Christ

Week 3

BECOMING

- Transforming weddings
- From death to life
- Wash me and I shall be clean

Week 4

- You are what you eat
- Forgiven and forgiving
- Praying for others
- The sound of music

Week 5

BELIEVING

- Creed
- Praise and thanksgiving
- Foretaste of heaven?

Week 6

- The office
- Mission-shaped worship

3. Selective Use

Another option is to select particular sections from the book for discussion. For instance, a church wishing to think about the way in which it celebrates pastoral services as part of its mission might choose to focus in detail on

- Transforming weddings
- From death to life, and
- Wash me and I shall be clean

and spend less time on the rest of the book.

4. Preaching and *Worship Changes Lives*

Whilst *Worship Changes Lives* has much to say about the place of Scripture in worship, nothing is said explicitly about the place of preaching. This is not in any way to undermine its importance! One helpful way to use the booklet might be to address the subject areas of the *Basics* section as a series of sermons – and to follow this with group study of the three remaining sections. *Common Worship* allows for deviation from the authorized

lectionary provision at certain times of the year precisely to enable this type of thematic preaching. (Details are given in note 7 at www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/lect/lectrules.html)

The advantage of this approach is that it enables some teaching about worship to be given to the whole church community, rather than only to those who are part of a particular group or groups.

5. Thematic streams

An alternative approach is to examine a number of the thematic streams running through the book, e.g.

- Baptism
 - Putting on Christ
 - Wash me and I shall be clean
- Holy Communion
 - Feeding on Christ
 - You are what you eat
 - Foretaste of heaven?
- Pastoral Services
 - Transforming weddings
 - From death to life

This would probably work best after an initial introduction (a reading of *Basics* or sermon series in 4 above), and perhaps some exploration of the links between worship and mission.

Worship and liturgy

There is sometimes confusion about the meanings of the words *worship* and *liturgy* and how they relate to each other. In its Report *Transforming Worship: Living the New Creation* (CHP, 2007), www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page_id=3 the Liturgical Commission sets out a distinction between the two. *Worship* is the response of redeemed human beings to God's purposes, while *liturgy* is the set of actions in which worship is expressed and by which it is released.

The Report also makes the point that it's important to keep the term *liturgy* free from any idea either of formality or of church style; *liturgy* is not just a 'high-church' word for *worship*. So 'café worship' is just as much a liturgy as is a solemn Eucharist in the catholic tradition: they will have quite different patterns and orders, but both of them depend on *a* pattern and *an* order so that worship may happen. It's also important to remember that *liturgy* encompasses much more than words: movement and image, silence and music, and the space in which they happen are all elements of liturgy.