

Connect Group notes 3.3.25

Don completed our sermon series 'Praise' on Sunday.

Don reminded us that "*while we are free to choose the God we want to worship, we are not free to choose our approach to that God. There is a protocol of approaching God's presence*"

As Christ followers, our approach requires praise.

Don looked at some different Hebrew words for praise to enhance the richness of our understanding around what that word means and how we do this, because "*we are not just brains on a stick*". Behaviour needs to follow what we believe..

The words were:

1. Yadah – to hold out the hand or worship with extended hands
2. Taqa – to clap hands, seals a deal, we enter into and agree with something
3. Macha – to clap in exaltation
4. Saphaq – to clap in derision or ridicule, contempt for darkness
5. Nakah – word of warfare, praise also extends his rule. See Psalm 149 re the power of praise in warfare
6. Halal – to be clear or to shine, or be clamorously foolish. God invites us to enjoy the Trinity.
7. Tehillah and Zamar – Psalm 47: 6-7, going beyond enjoyment to enlightenment, sing with understanding
8. Hilluwl and Shabach – An overflow of thanksgiving, Psalm 4:7. Our pride needs to die.
9. Barak – to kneel and bow

Discussion points

1. Discuss why it is important to use our bodies in worship?
What does this do for our spirits in responding to God in this way?

Why do we need to enter in with neither anger (I don't want to be told what to do!), or doubt (what's the point anyway?)

2. Don mentioned there is a 'vulnerability' to lifting our hands, and the sacrifice of praise will always involve a confrontation with fear and pride... (1 Chronicles 21:24)

Discuss what this may mean for each of us?

What does clamorously foolish look like?

(lifting hands, dancing, lying prostrate, shouting out loud etc as a community but also privately)

Discuss our thoughts on the phrase "praise doesn't have to be pretty".

3. Discuss the word Saphaq - to clap in derision or ridicule, in contempt of darkness
What does this say to us about the impact of praise upon darkness?
4. Halal – God invites us to enjoy the Trinity.
Is this a new concept for us?
What might this mean, and how do we do this?

Application and Prayer

- Ask God to search our hearts this week for areas of pride, anger or doubt, and to show us how we can become a sacrifice of praise for him.
- Pray that God would show us where else we can express praise throughout our week, to extend his rule in our lives and spheres of influence.