



Jeremiah 29:5-7 (NLT)

⁵ “**Build homes, and plan to stay.** Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. **Multiply!** Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And **work for the peace and prosperity** of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its **welfare will determine your welfare.**”

1. Love God: Going Deeper in Worship

“Love the Lord your God with all you heart¹.” It is good that we have different styles of worship and different congregations. Our growing Sunday morning Celebration is appreciated a great deal. There is a hunger for God and there is a sense of expectation. Some Sundays we particularly feel God’s presence. People’s individual worship is also healthy.

However, with larger numbers and dependence on technology can come a loss of spontaneity and the opportunity for individuals to contribute. We are good at sung worship yet these times can seem rather more performance led.

By 2020, we will have a greater understanding of what it means to worship God authentically and creatively, and we will actively participate in this worship both together and when we are apart.

What are the priorities?

We recognise that ‘worship’ is giving everything to God every day and this principle will flow into times when we come together. Yet, we are to be a worshipping community. We need to declare Jesus is Lord together. Worship is caught not taught. We need to be like diplomats coming back to the ‘embassy’ to share and get built up. Because we have all had different journeys in life, our worship needs to help us to move on.

We need to seek greater creativity in what is offered in worship (especially the use of silence, listening, watching, and location). We need to recognise the overall limitations on the site for Sunday mornings and find a second time for many people to worship together at the Church centre.

What’s the path from here to there?

We will improve the quality of collective prayer and encourage more prayerful involvement. We will continue to encourage people to arrive on time to worship, prepared to contribute and expectant to meet with God. We will take more opportunities to ‘declare who God is’ especially by praying and sharing testimony.

We will find ways to encourage people who are not musical to express their worship. We will better explain how we use the giving of money in worship.

During open worship, we will allow more space for contributions that build on previous ones and make it clearer what is being asked of people (e.g. when to pray). We will introduce more visual clues (as well as musical ones) in worship especially looking for variety in expression. To do this we will particularly involve non-musicians and younger people.

We will carefully explain why we are trying different approaches.

¹ Luke 10.27

We will explore different seating layouts, improvements to audio and visual provision in the Worship Area to help people feel more connected.

How should we (re)allocate time, people, plant and money do this?

To handle growing numbers, we will actively explore a two-service model of Sunday worship based around 10.30am and 4pm. We will transfer staff time resources from 7pm low attendance events to 4pm ones. We will undertake some of these at The Bridge Community School but we will not seek to plant a congregation on the Romans Edge estate. We will find a venue where the whole of GBC can worship together from time to time.

We will find a quiet space in the Church Centre to encourage worship whenever the building is open (possibly an extended Room 5).

We will provide more flexibility for staging, sound and visuals so that seating layouts can be changed more easily.