

# Small Group Discussion Guide

*"The Maturing of Worship"* • Pastor Mel Baga, D.Min. • Feb. 14, 2026

## OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we come as we are. Quiet our hearts, renew our minds, and receive our lives as a living sacrifice. Deepen our worship by widening our love. Amen.

## OPEN

When you hear the phrase "worship service," what do you think it means? In what ways have you experienced worship as more than music—as a whole-life offering?

## READ

Read Romans 12:1–3 aloud slowly. Then re-read verse 1. What word or phrase stands out—and why might it be for you today?

## DISCUSS

Pick as many as time allows:

1. In Romans 12:1, what does it mean to "present your bodies" to God? What makes this different from offering God only thoughts, feelings, or intentions?
2. Paul calls this "a living sacrifice." What does a living sacrifice look like in ordinary life—at home, at work, in relationships?
3. Paul says this is our "reasonable act of worship." Older translations say "reasonable service." The Greek word behind this is *latreia*—worship-service directed to God. How does that refuse to separate worship and service?
4. Romans 12:2 connects worship to transformation ("be transformed by the renewing of your mind"). Where do you feel most conformed to "this age" right now—and what would renewed worship look like there?
5. Romans 12:3 immediately moves into humility and community ("not to think of yourself more highly..."). How does worship reshape the way we see ourselves and others?
6. Think about Auburn Church life: Sabbath ministries, potlucks, ACS, the Renewal Center, weekday mercy. Where do you see

“Romans 12 in motion”—bodies presented, mercy embodied, worship maturing?

## **PRACTICE**

□ **“One Doorway” prayer (together).** Complete this sentence quietly (or out loud if comfortable): “Jesus, this week I sense You inviting me toward the \_\_\_\_\_ Worship Space. Help me take one small step by \_\_\_\_\_.”

## **REFLECTION**

Romans 12 teaches that worship is not confined to a sanctuary moment. Worship is mercy received becoming a body offered—a whole life placed at God’s disposal. The word Paul uses (*latreia*) holds together what we often separate: service offered to God is worship; worship that never becomes embodied service remains incomplete. So we’re not trying to “do all five spaces” at once. We’re listening for the Spirit’s next faithful widening—one circle outward, with the same worship.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord, meet us where we are. Renew our minds, humble our hearts, and receive our lives as worship. Widen our love gently until our worship matures into service. Amen.

# **Daily Devotionals**

## **MONDAY — THE DIVINE WORSHIP SPACE**

*“Present your bodies...this is your act of worship (latreia).”*

**Reflect:** Romans 12 begins in the Divine space: you before God, “on the basis of mercy.” Worship matures into service only if it begins as mercy received. Before you do anything for God, you let God do something in you—re-centering your identity, quieting your striving, and turning your whole self toward Him.

**Read:** Romans 12:1–2. What mercy are you living “on the basis of” today?

**Practice:** Take five unhurried minutes. No phone. Whisper: “Jesus, I place myself at Your disposal today.”

**Pray:** Father, let Your mercy re-center me. Receive my body, my attention, my day as worship. Amen.

## **TUESDAY — THE TRANSPARENCY WORSHIP SPACE**

*“The blood of Christ...will purify our conscience...so that we may serve/ worship (latreuō) the living God.”(Hebrews 9:14)*

**Reflect:** Transparency is not exposure—it’s healing. Hebrews says cleansing makes worship possible: not performance, not hiding, not shame-powered religion, but free worship-service (latreuō). When the conscience is cleansed, worship can widen into honesty with a few safe people—because you’re no longer protecting an image; you’re living from mercy.

**Read:** Hebrews 9:14. What is God inviting you to bring into the light with wisdom and safety?

**Practice:** Reach out to one safe person: “Can I share something briefly and ask you to pray?”

**Pray:** Jesus, cleanse my conscience and give me safe relationships where I can be known and loved. Amen.

## **WEDNESDAY — THE PERSONAL WORSHIP SPACE**

*“To them belong...the covenants...and the worship (latreia).”*

**Reflect:** Paul calls “worship” (latreia) part of covenant identity. Worship is not an event you attend; it is a people you belong to—and a life you live. In the Personal space (your committed circle), worship matures through steady, repeated love: forgiveness, encouragement, serving at the table, showing up again. This is where worship becomes community formation.

**Read:** Romans 9:1–5 (focus on v.4). What does it mean to live as someone who belongs to God?

**Practice:** Do one quiet act of service for someone in your circle—no spotlight, no announcement.

**Pray:** Father, shape me into a person who loves steadily. Let my worship form my community life. Amen.

## THURSDAY — THE SOCIAL WORSHIP SPACE

*"They go regularly...performing their ritual duties (latreia)."*

**Reflect:** Regular worship is good—but Hebrews reminds us that ritual without renewal can become routine. Romans 12 says worship is living and mind-renewing. In the Social space, worship widens into shared mission: not just "I worship privately" and "I attend publicly," but "we move together." Worship matures when a community begins to carry mercy outward as a shared rhythm.

**Read:** Hebrews 9:1–10 (focus on v.6). Ask: where has worship become routine for me—and what would "living sacrifice" look like there?

**Practice:** Choose one simple outward step with someone: a prayer walk, a meal invitation, a visit, a kindness plan.

**Pray:** Jesus, renew our worship until it becomes love in motion—together. Amen.

## FRIDAY — THE PUBLIC WORSHIP SPACE

*"We...worship/serve (latreuō) by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus."*

**Reflect:** Public space is where witness matters most—workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, community. Paul says true public worship-service (latreuō) is Spirit-powered and Christ-centered—not self-display, not pressure, not earning. Romans 12 calls your body a living sacrifice; Philippians 3 says the Spirit supplies the power. This is worship that ripens into visible mercy—so others are gently drawn inward toward Jesus.

**Read:** Philippians 3:1–3. What would it look like to "glory in Christ" in your public world today?

**Practice:** Encourage one person in your public space. Offer presence, kindness, and (if appropriate) prayer.

**Pray:** Holy Spirit, make my public life worship. Let my service point to Jesus, not to me. Amen.