

# CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ the King – Raleigh  
Helps for Liturgy

## Introduction

The Call to Worship is a universal part of every worship service, which gets expressed differently in every tradition. Sometimes it is an informal welcome and greeting of hospitality – in others it is a formal act of beginning ‘public worship.’

At its core it is a proclamation from God’s word to God’s people and the world. It echoes the command of Matt 17:5 “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

It is a call to action – an active leaving behind of our worldly pursuits and pleasures to recommit our whole heart, mind, and strength to God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Formally, a call to worship should include an invocation – which is an epiclesis of the divine name – a calling on the name of God. This is the biblical model, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth.” (Psalm 8:1)

The Lord’s Prayer model’s this, “hallowed by thy name.” Calvin also began his worship services from Psalm 124:8 “Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

When we are called to worship we are called under the care of his name, under the protection of our shepherd. It is only he that can lead us to the still waters, to abundant life, to the feast amidst the enemies of God – sin, sorrow, and the devil.

It’s helpful to remember that the invocation is always proclaimed into an idolatrous world and people whose hearts are in constant battle with idolatry. Sadly and gloriously, we must be reminded of which God is the true God, and how we are to address him in worship!

“Wheresoever the Name of God is, all is auspicious...Whereonsoever the Name is placed, there all things are auspicious.” Calvin, Homily IX on Colossians

The Call to Worship lays the basis for the whole foundation of communication in worship. In the Call to Worship God initiates with us – speaking to us from his heavenly throne to gather around. We hear his call and respond with our lives – in obedience, thankfulness, praise and adoration. This initial interaction embodies worship as a dialogue. The rest of the worship service will flow from this initial action. God calls and we respond – in dialogical worship.

The Book of Psalms is the best place to go to look for specific texts that call God’s people to worship. Sometimes you will find that verses have been drawn out for the use as “calls” to worship. Often this is discouraged, but hopefully the text chosen serves as a ‘guide’ or ‘survey’ of the whole psalm.

Take the opportunity from time to time to read a whole psalm in public worship – this often forces us to listen to the whole counsel of God even when we find it obscure or difficult.

The following texts are examples of classic texts of biblical ‘calls to worship’ and are mostly drawn from the Psalms. They can be used responsively (antiphonally) as displayed or simply read by the leader and extemporized. Many of these psalms use the corporate sense of “I”. If it makes sense for your context use “we” or “Let Us” such as Psalm 95:1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD.

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### From Psalm 9:1-2

*Leader:*

I (we) will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;  
I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

**People:**

**I will be glad and exult in you;  
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.**

### From Psalm 34:3

*Leader:*

Oh, magnify the Lord with me,

**People:**

**Let us exalt his name together!**

### From Psalm 47:1-2, 5-6

*Leader:*

Clap your hands, all peoples!  
Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

**People:**

**For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared,  
A great king over all the earth.**

*Leader:*

God has gone up with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

**People:**

**Sing praises to God, sing praises!  
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!**

### From Psalm 66

*Leader:*

Shout for joy to God, all the earth.

**People:**

**Sing the glory of his name;  
Give to him glorious praise!**

*Leader:*

Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!  
So great is your power that your enemies  
Come cringing to you."

**People:**

**All the earth worships you and sings praises to you;  
They sing praises to your name.**

### From Psalm 67

*Leader:*

May God be gracious to us and bless us  
And make his face to shine upon us,

**People:**

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**That your way may be known on earth,  
Your saving power among all nations.**

*Leader:*

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

**People:**

**Let all the peoples praise you!**

**From Psalm 72**

*Leader:*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel  
Who alone does wondrous things.

**People:**

**Blessed be his glorious name forever.**

*Leader:*

May the whole earth be filled with his glory.

**People:**

**Amen and Amen!**

**From Psalm 84:1-2,4**

**Leader:**

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!  
My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

**People:**

**Blessed are those who dwell in your house,  
ever singing your praise!**

**From Psalm 86:8-10**

*Leader:*

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,  
nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship before you, O Lord,  
and shall glorify your name.

**People:**

**For you are great and do wondrous things;  
you alone are God.**

**Psalm 89:1-4**

*Leader:*

I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever;

**People:**

**with my mouth I will make known  
your faithfulness to all generations.**

*Leader:*

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For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;

**People:**  
**in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."**

*Leader:*

You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;  
I have sworn to David my servant:  
I will establish your offspring forever,  
and build your throne for all generations.

**People:**  
**Praise the Lord!**

### **Psalm 92:1-2**

*Leader:*

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

**People:**  
**to declare your steadfast love in the morning,**  
**and your faithfulness by night.**

### **From Psalm 95:1-3,6**

*Leader:*

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;  
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**People:**  
**Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;**  
**let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!**

*Leader:*

For the LORD is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.

**People:**  
**Oh come, let us worship and bow down;**  
**let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!**

### **From Psalm 96**

*Leader:*

Oh sing to the LORD a new song,  
Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

**People:**  
**Sing to the Lord, bless his name;**  
**Tell of his salvation from day to day.**

*Leader:*

Declare his glory among the nations,

**People:**  
**For great is the LORD,**  
**and greatly to be praised;**

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### From Psalm 96:7-10

*Leader:*

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

**People:**

**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
bring an offering, and come into his courts!**

*Leader:*

Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;  
tremble before him, all the earth!

**People:**

**Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"**

### From Psalm 98:1-4, 6

*Leader:*

Oh sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things!  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.

**People:**

**The LORD has made known his salvation;  
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

*Leader:*

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;

**People:**

**Break forth into joyous song and sing praises,  
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!**

### From Psalm 99

*Leader:*

The Lord is Sovereign; let the people tremble in awe.

**People:**

**God is enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth shake.**

*Leader:*

The Lord is great in Zion and is high above all peoples.

**People:**

**Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God,  
And worship God upon the holy mountain.**

### From Psalm 100:1-5

*Leader:*

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!  
Serve the LORD with gladness!

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**People:**  
**Come into his presence with singing!**

*Leader:*  
Know that the LORD, he is God!  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

**People:**  
**Enter his gates with thanksgiving,**  
**and his courts with praise!**  
**Give thanks to him; bless his name!**

*Leader:*  
For the LORD is good;

**People:**  
**His steadfast love endures forever,**  
**and his faithfulness to all generations.**

### **From Psalm 105**

*Leader:*  
Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;  
Make known his deeds among the peoples!

**People:**  
**Sing to him, sing praises to him;**  
**Tell of all his wondrous works!**

*Leader:*  
Glory in his holy name;  
Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!

**People:**  
**Seek the LORD and his strength;**  
**Seek his presence continually!**

### **From Psalm 106:1, 48**

*Leader:*  
Praise the Lord.

**People:**  
**Give thanks to the Lord,**  
**for he is good;**  
**his love endures forever.**

*Leader:*  
Praise be to the Lord,  
the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.

**People:**

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**Let all the people say, "Amen!"  
Praise the Lord.**

### **From Psalm 108:1-5**

*Leader:*

My heart is steadfast, O God!  
I will sing and make melody with all my being!  
Awake, O harp and lyre!  
I will awake the dawn!

**People:**

**I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples;  
I will sing praises to you among the nations.**

*Leader:*

For your steadfast love is great above the heavens;

**People:**

**Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.**

*Leader:*

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!

**People:**

**Let your glory be over all the earth!**

### **From Psalm 111**

*Leader:*

I will extol the LORD with all my heart  
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

**People:**

**Glorious are the works of the LORD;  
Glorious and majestic are his deeds.**

*Leader:*

He has caused his wonders to be remembered;  
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.  
He remembers his covenant forever.

**People:**

**He has shown his people the power of his works.  
The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his foundations are trustworthy.**

*Leader:*

He provided redemption for his people;  
he ordained his covenant forever—  
holy and awesome is his name.

**People:**

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
all who follow His word have good understanding.  
To him belongs eternal praise.**

**Based on Psalm 113: 1-4**

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*Leader:*

Praise the Lord!

Praise, O servants of the Lord,  
praise the name of the Lord!

**People:**

**Blessed be the name of the Lord  
from this time forth and forevermore!  
From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of the Lord is to be praised!**

*Leader:*

**& People:**

**The Lord is high above all nations,  
and his glory above the heavens!**

**Based on Psalm 117**

*Leader:*

Praise the Lord, all Nations!

**People:**

**Extol Him, all peoples!**

*Leader:*

For great is His steadfast love towards us,

**People:**

**The faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.**

**All: Praise the Lord!**

**From Psalm 118:1,28-29; 124:8**

*Leader:*

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

**People:**

**You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;  
you are my God; I will extol you.**

**Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!**

*Leader:*

Our help is in the name of the Lord

**People:**

**Who made heaven and earth.**

**From Psalm 134:1-3,21**

*Leader:*

I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.

**People:**

**Every day I will bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.**

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*Leader:*

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,  
and his greatness is unsearchable.

**People:**

**My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,  
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.**

**From Psalm 135:1-3,5-6**

*Leader:*

Praise the Lord!

**People:**

**Praise the name of the Lord,**

*Leader:*

Give praise, O servants of the Lord,  
who stand in the house of the Lord,  
in the courts of the house of our God!

**People:**

**Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good;  
sing to his name, for it is pleasant!**

*Leader:*

For I know that the Lord is great,  
and that our Lord is above all gods.

**People:**

**Whatever the Lord pleases, he does,  
in heaven and on earth,  
in the seas and all deeps.**

**From Psalm 136:1-3, 26**

*Leader:*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

**People:**

**For his steadfast love endures forever.**

*Leader:*

Give thanks to the God of gods,

**People:**

**For his steadfast love endures forever.**

*Leader:*

Give thanks to the Lord of lords,

**People:**

**For his steadfast love endures forever;**

*Leader:*

Give thanks to the God of heaven,

**People:**

**For his steadfast love endures forever.**

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### From Psalm 145:1-3,21

*Leader:*

I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.

**People:**

**Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.**

*Leader:*

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,  
and his greatness is unsearchable.

**People:**

**My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,  
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.**

### Psalm 145:18 and Isaiah 55:6-7

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

*Note this wedding of Psalm 145:18 and Isaiah 55:6-7 – passages of similar theme – into a unified Call to Worship. When performing such “wedding” we should take care not to ignore or twist the original meaning of the Word of God. At the same time, we should rejoice in the Bible’s continuity and be willing to use passages that reinforce one another to exhort God’s people to worship according to these great themes of Scripture. (Brian Chapell, Christ-Centered worship)*

### From Psalm 146:1-2

*Leader:*

Praise the Lord!

**People:**

**Praise the Lord, O my soul!**

*Leader:*

I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

**People:**

**I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**

### From Psalm 147:1-2,7

*Leader:*

Praise the Lord!

For it is good to sing praises to our God;  
for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

**People:**

**Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;  
make melody to our God on the lyre!**

### From Psalm 150:1-2,6

**All:**

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**Praise the Lord!**  
**Praise God in his sanctuary;**  
**praise him in his mighty heavens!**

*Leader:*

Praise him for his mighty deeds;  
praise him according to his excellent greatness!

**All:**

**Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!**  
**Praise the Lord!**

### based on Hebrews 1:1-3

Leader: Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets;

**People: Now God has spoken to us by his Son.**

Leader: God made the world through the Son,  
who has been appointed heir of all things  
and the perfect reflection of God's glory.

**People: The Son is the radiance of the glory of God  
and the exact imprint of his nature,  
and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.**

Leader: Praise God for the gift of the Son.

**People: He is the light of the world!**

### From Revelation 4:8b; 5:13

*Leader:*

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

**People:**

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

### From Revelation 5:12-13

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!...To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" – Since he is so worthy, let us join with the hosts of heaven in offering the Savior our worship.

*Adapted from Rev. 5:12-13. Note again the exhortation added by the worship leader at the end of the scriptures quotation to make this glorious statement of truth a Call to Worship. Choral anthems or hymns that include such words may also make an appropriate Call to Worship. (Brian, Chapell, Christ-Centered Worship)*

### Revelation 19:5-7

*Leader:*

"Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

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**People:**

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;