



Throughout the Bible people worshipped God in all circumstances. Abram when he saw & was spoken to by God, built an altar to worship (Gen 12:7). Moses led the people out of Egypt & sang a song of worship (Ex.15:1-18). When Hannah handed Samuel over to the LORD (1 Sam 2:1-10) she worshipped, as did Elijah (1 Kings 18:39) before the prophets of Baal & Job when he lost everything (Job 1:20) fell to his knees in worship. When Mary discovered she was pregnant with Jesus, she worshipped (Lk 1:46-55) as did the Magi upon greeting the baby (Mt 2:11), & so too Simeon when he was presented with Jesus (Lk 2:28). When the disciples realized that Jesus was the Messiah (Mt 14:33) they worshipped Him & in Revelation 4-5 as the 24 elders, the 4 living creatures, the multitudes of angels & every creature in heaven & earth see Jesus, the Lamb that was slain, standing in the centre of the throne in heaven, they lift up their voices & worship.

WE ARE ROOTED IN WORSHIP!

Spring Harvest (SH) this week examined worship under their title theme, “UNRIVALLED”. Their theme book “*Why Worship*”, edited by Hughes & Drake, has contributions from a range of speakers & perspectives providing us with a feast of theological knowledge & practical application. SH main teacher Doug Williams sounded a cautionary note to the UK’s 21st century churches when he said, “*there are a lot of people growing old but not growing up*”. After such teaching it is important to take time to ponder & reflect, & to pray about what we have learned & how that works out in our own lives & in our church & communities’ lives. We ought to be practically changed, with ongoing behaviours & attitudes reshaped. For a couple of weeks I am going to look here at “*Why worship*” under my theme, “**ROOTED IN WORSHIP**”

If there is a ‘key’ to life, a secret that unlocks the door to living the best life possible, it’s the key of worship. **Right worship, of the right thing, leads to the right life.** We were reminded a number

of times that worship has become a narrow word for church music, when it should be a broad word meaning a life lived for the One who creates, sustains & perfects all things. During covid with most church buildings closed & those who were open not allowed to sing, it was a reminder of what is truly at the heart of worship. The positive aspect of lockdown is that it has been preparation for some time in the future in all of our lives, when we can’t sing or raise our hands or stand in worship, due to a short-term illness or perhaps because of longer-term physical impairments. Corrie Ten Boon after the horrors of a WW2 concentration camp wrote, ‘*If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within, you’ll be depressed. If you look at God, you’ll be at rest.*’ In worship we come before God with all our hang-ups, fears & mess, aware of our finite nature, and we embrace God’s infinite love.

Worship is about the mess & fragility of humanity being caught up in the perfection & love of divinity. It’s about an encounter, not rules, religion or regulations. We miss the point when we reduce worship to programmes & practicalities, rather than focusing on the person & presence of Jesus. It’s about relationship & it’s ALL about Him.

The truth is that we all worship something – ourselves or our family or a hobby, or we sing anthems to our chosen sports team, or enjoy a lifestyle of sun-worshipping, or ... the list is endless & none of them bad in themselves. However whatever it is, if it captivates our heart’s affection, our mind’s attention & our soul’s ambition, it effectively has our worship.

Paul urges us in Romans 12:1,2 to “*offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy & pleasing to God – this is your true & proper worship*”. The Message version reads, “*So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work & walking-around life – & place it before God as an offering.*”

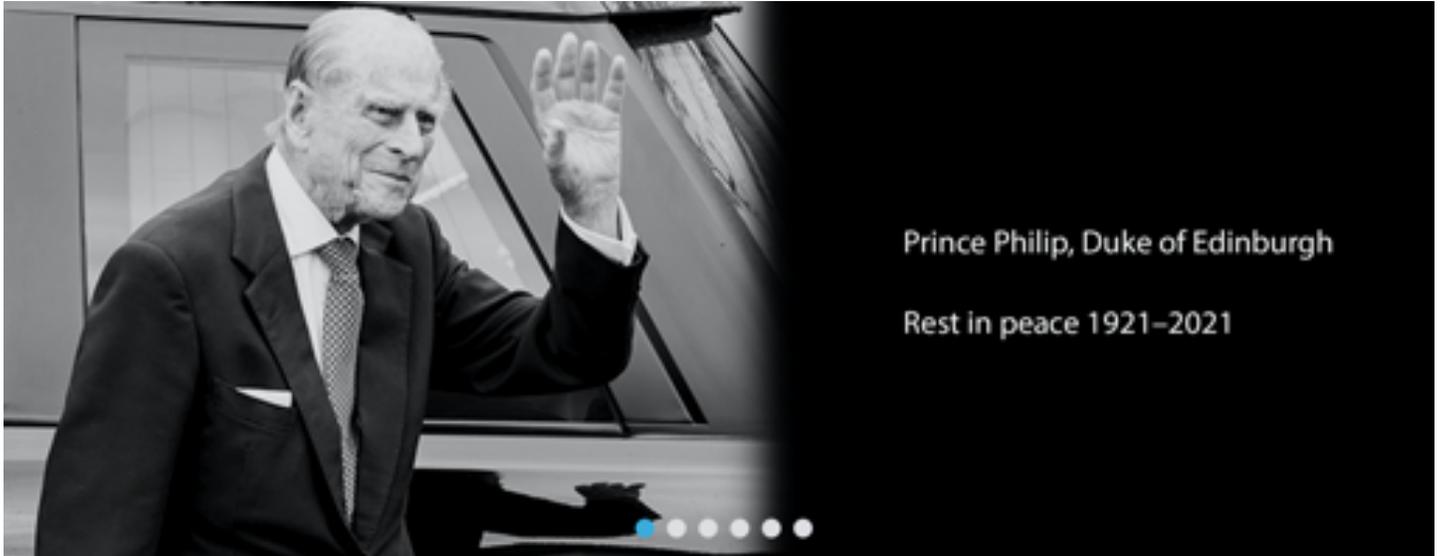
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Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him". In worship, we bring everything (our ordinary everyday lives; our hopes & dreams; our finances; our relationships & careers; our physical bodies & emotions; our strengths & weaknesses) & we place them all before God in an offering of surrender. We are saying, 'I am completely yours'. This is our response to His unconditional love & mercy.

When our worship is genuinely open to experience Him in a new way, He will bless us as we focus on Him, who He is & all that we know about Him. Williams opening statement was, "*Worship begins with a submissive & reverential response to the disclosures of God*". If worshipping God fails to inspire or excite us, could it be that we're not seeing Him correctly? May we all ask Him today to help us remain rooted in worship. AMEN.

TAKEN FROM THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN WEBSITE THIS AFTERNOON



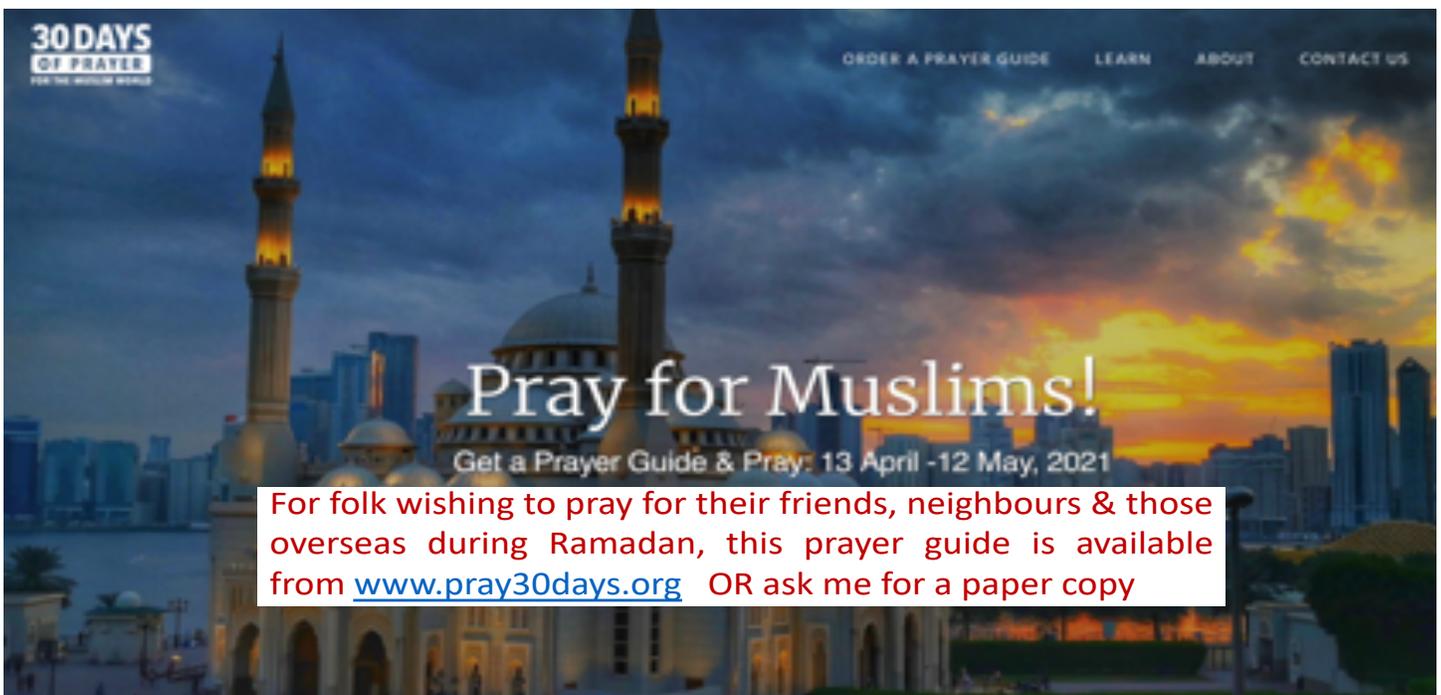
Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Rest in peace 1921–2021

We pray for Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family as they mourn the death of Prince Philip.

We pray that they will know the comfort of God, who says 'I will never leave you or forsake you'.

We give thanks for the life of Prince Philip, for the support he gave to the Queen and for all that he brought to our nation.



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