

Cheshire South Methodist Circuit
Worship at Home – Sunday 31st August 2025



Call to Worship

We come to worship a wonderful God. We come not as slaves, but as the truly free;
not as petitioners, but as those already heard; not as interlopers, but as invited guests. Though we
may be in dispersed locations, the love of Christ gathers us together, joyful and eager to worship.

StF no. 362 *Meekness and Majesty*

1 Meekness and majesty, manhood and Deity,
in perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity,
kneels in humility and washes our feet.

*Oh, what a mystery, meekness and majesty,
bow down and worship, for this is your God, this
is your God.*

2 Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life, conquering through
sacrifice,
and as they crucify prays "Father forgive".

Oh, what a mystery...

3 Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.
Oh, what a mystery...

CCL 821965 Graham Kendrick

Prayer

Lord of infinity, who also chose meekness and humility in Jesus, we worship You.

You are the Lord of this morning, whether it greets us with a burst of sunshine or refreshing showers.

Yours are the simple pleasures that delight our taste and smell, our hearing and our seeing which are
also Your gift to us and all creation.

We thank You that in worship we are never alone, but share with countless others:

in the music that heaven also enjoys,

in the challenge of Your Word,

in the privilege of prayer,

in the comfort of Christian fellowship.

Thank You, generous God, for this Lord's Day, and all that it speaks to us of Your providence and Your
grace. **Amen.**

Readings:

Proverbs 25: 6 - 7

Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great; for it is better to be told, 'Come up here', than to be put lower in the presence of a noble.

Luke 14: 1, 7 - 14

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. ² There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. ³ Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" ⁴ But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.

⁵ Then he asked them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?" ⁶ And they had nothing to say.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: ⁸ "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. ⁹ If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all the other guests. ¹¹ For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Time to Reflect

Formal dinners have been in short supply the last couple of years, but we all remember an occasion like a wedding where the seating plan enabled us to know our place, and perhaps also to judge our social standing on the basis of how far from the top table it was!

It was a trickier business for Jesus's contemporaries, who had to judge in relation to the other guests how close to the host their status dictated they should be. Everyday wisdom, shown in those verses from Proverbs, dictated that it was far better for one's street cred to aim low and be promoted than high and get relegated to the margins.

"Pride goes before a fall" our own proverb says. Two ducks and a frog were great friends in the farm pond they shared. But one really hot August it was drying up. No problem for the ducks who could fly off and find another, but that was too far for the frog to jump. They hatched a plan. The ducks would fly side by side holding the ends of a stick in their beaks whilst the frog with its powerful jaws would hang from the middle. It worked so well that a farmer looking up exclaimed aloud, "What a good idea. I wonder who thought of that?" "I did", croaked the frog!

Pride comes before a fall. But Luke sees the words of Jesus here as a "parable" (verse 7), so it is not just advice on keeping up appearances. It is about life in the Kingdom where God is the host. It is God

who decides our place. Genuine humility is not about calculating how to look good; it is simply desiring that God should determine our place.

George Whitefield and John Wesley disagreed on several points. A man who loved stirring controversy once asked Whitefield if he thought he would see Wesley in heaven. "I fear not", Whitefield replied, "for he will be so near the eternal throne and we at such a distance, we shall hardly get sight of him."

If we are willing to receive the teaching of Jesus as disciples we shall be free from the world's obsession with posturing for position.

Take a time to sit quietly. *Reflect on what humility means in your life.*

A time of prayer

Lord, it is your call that gives us dignity and we would be nothing without you.
We pray for true humility in Your Church.

We remember all who evangelize or serve in areas of poverty, apathy or animosity, and all who face humiliation for their faith.

We pray for ministers who have lost their way, narrowed in their focus, succumbed to the temptation to self-aggrandisement, and for all believers who no longer fulfil their vocation. Make us all worthy of our calling.

We pray for people we categorise as "home-less" or "destitute", but who are individuals as valuable in Your eyes as anyone, and more precious in their vulnerability. And we pray for those who care for them and seek to make accessible to them the opportunities they long for.

We remember church-based community workers who on behalf of us all, but not in our stead, share good news with the poor. Make us all worthy of our calling and willing to share all that we know and have from you.

We remember all who are belittled by others, who lack confidence in themselves, who are timid and nervous. Pour out on them the strength of your Holy Spirit, and give them courage and assurance.

We ask your blessing on those who live with the hostility of war, oppression or abuse, terror and starvation. Particularly today we remember the people of Ukraine, Gaza, the Sudan and so many other countries, and pray that your will may be done, and your kingdom come on earth.

We pray for sick and struggling people whom we know individually...
And we acknowledge that we also need your healing for we are not yet perfect in love. Make us all worthy of our calling.

Father, we thank You that You invite us and accept us into Your kingdom, and that through Christ You have triumphed over death. We remember our loved ones in eternity.
May we too be found faithful to your call, in Jesus's name, who encouraged us to pray:

Our Father....

StF no. 713 *Show me how to stand for justice*

1 Show me how to stand for justice
how to work for what is right,
how to challenge false assumptions,
how to walk within the light.
May I learn to share more freely
in a world so full of greed,
showing your immense compassion
by the life I choose to lead.

2 Teach my heart to treasure mercy,
whether given or received
for my need has not diminished
since the day I first believed.
Let me seek no satisfaction
boasting of what I have done.
but rejoice that I am pardoned
and accepted in your Son.

3 Gladly I embrace a lifestyle
modelled on your living word,
in humility submitting
to the truth that I have heard;
make me conscious of your presence
every day in all I do:
by your Spirit's gracious prompting
may I learn to walk with you.

CCL 821965 Martin Leckebusch

A prayer of blessing

As our worship continues through our service of Jesus Christ during this week, may he who is the same yesterday, today and forever fill us with his peace and joy. And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and remain with us always. **Amen.**