



Eunice

Rosa

Gilka

Jussara

Gorete

Lucy

Carolina

Viviane

Isaura

# The Wonders of Worship

*Worship for Women in Brazilian Free Will Baptist Churches*

by Rejane Eagleton

Mention worship and the first thing that comes to most people's minds is singing. Maybe this happens because we have a praise and worship team or worship group in some of our churches. A lot of Christians don't realize the different ways we can worship our God.

This past fall, I interviewed some of our ladies from the First Church in Campinas concerning their thoughts on worship. I also spoke with Isaura, a dear sister from our FWB Church in Belo Horizonte, who is now living in São Paulo. Here are their responses to these questions.

## ***When speaking about worship, what comes to your mind?***

**Eunice:** I think about God's greatness and His mercy, taking care of us at all times.

**Gilka:** For me, worshipping God starts when I wake up and continues until the last minute of the day before I fall asleep. When I wake up my heart must be ready to do everything that pleases Him, in thoughts and actions, in my attitudes and words. As God's daughter, I need to remember that some things I may be inclined to do hurt His holiness, and because of that, my heart must reject them. I know I won't be always successful when my sinful nature prevails; however, thanks to His infinite mercy, I have the chance to confess my sins and mistakes and to be purified (from them).

**Viviane:** When I think about worship I think about meditating about the love and mercy God has for us, sinners.

**Carolina:** To me, it means praise, prayer, glorification, thankfulness.

**Rosa:** It is to give Him recognition for all the incredible and wonderful things He created. It is only to Him that I need to be thankful.

**Jussara:** To worship God is to bow down before Him, honor Him, and seek Him with all of our heart.

**Gorete:** For me it's something personal and individual, something from conviction, truthful, that comes from the heart.

**Isaura:** I think about thankfulness and to serve our Lord in total communion in the spirit. (Isaura)

## ***In what ways can we worship the Lord our God?***

**Eunice:** In contemplating His creation, praying and giving thanks.

**Lucy:** Through exalting Him, praising Him, and giving Him glory.

**Gilka:** We can worship in our quiet time, when we are in private with Him, as we read and meditate on His Word and try to obey, putting into practice His teachings. We also worship Him when we gather with other family members (Christians) or meet together as a congregation to praise the name of the Lord, meditate on a passage from the Scriptures and pray one for another and for the world. We worship the Lord when

we do good to somebody (*even to those who don't demonstrate any affection toward us*); when we resist to a bad or defamatory thought or some destructive criticism; when we think more about our neighbor instead of ourselves; when we feel compassion for those following the path to perdition (hell) and we talk to them about God's love and His provision for salvation; when we consider others more important than ourselves (*which is not so easy*). In short, we worship the Lord as we understand that our body is the temple of God's Holy Spirit and we knowingly seek to walk in sanctity, completely separated from worldly things that sadden Him. (Gilka)

**Viviane:** We worship God when we give testimony of His love, when we love our neighbor and when we show the difference He makes in our lives.

**Carolina:** I see several ways or forms of adoration/worship: in singing or drama. Studying the Word and growing in knowing the Word, I also see as worship.

**Rosa:** For me, I see as ways of worship all the things I, as a living being, do, like: when I breathe the air I need for survival, by the way I dress myself (*in and out of the church*), by the words I speak, by the love I show toward my neighbor, by my desire of becoming a better person, day by day.

**Jussara:** I think about worship as prayer, praise, thankfulness, love, obedience, faith and the desire of always learning more from Him and taking this knowledge to others.

**Gorete:** We can worship the Lord by obeying his commandments, by reading His Word and applying it to our lives.

**Isaura:** For me, worship includes singing praises that glorify Him and speak of His works in my life; talking about Him to others, regardless of whether the person knows Him or not; having fellowship with the brethren in the faith; confessing His name in all forms; witnessing about all that He is to me; raising my hands as almost touching Him; studying the Word; talking with Him in prayer, in a devotional or even through a daughter-Father dialogue where I, humbly and honestly, can demonstrate my dependence on His fatherly wisdom and love that can come only from Him, without hesitation or error.

### **Which form (or kind) of worship do you use most often?**

**Eunice:** Meditation (contemplation).

**Lucy:** I always start by giving thanks; and then I glorify Him for all He has done for me, for my family, my friends, and brothers and sisters.

**Gilka:** Well, the question is singular, but I'll answer it in plural: individual devotional/quiet time and resisting bad thoughts.

**Viviane:** For me, I think it is demonstrating love toward people and thankfulness to God for all He does for us.

**Carolina:** I like singing praises, singing hymns, and praying (which is essential fuel in a Christian's life). I see prayer as the greatest form of adoration/worship.

**Rosa:** I don't have a specific way of worship that's more important; however I think I can mention my complete dependency on Him in all moments in my life. I worship Him in every moment of my day; I do not do anything without first talking to Him and always hope in Him. And He has blessed me greatly at all times. I get quick answers and always accept them, even if they are not what I expected.

**Jussara:** Prayer and gladness—not only for what He does, but for Who He is.

**Gorete:** The form I use most is singing.

**Isaura:** Music is the means by which I speak fluently with God, in the pain and in joy. I prefer to worship Him with songs whose lyrics express the way I feel His love and His care for me, which exalt His Name, being careful to reflect on what is being said (sung), because not everything is what it seems. The lyrics need to be in accordance with the Word.

### **Is there a special or uncommon way in which you worship the Lord?**

**Eunice:** I don't think it's a special form, but it is usually what I do: to see His hand in everything that happens in my life and in the life of my family.

**Lucy:** I glorify Jesus' sacrifice on the cross because I can rejoice today and will also rejoice after death. I like to praise Him audibly, thinking He is right in front of me. It is so nice!

**Gilka:** Not sure if this fits here, but I like to listen. I like to listen to people and keep to myself what they tell me. Sometimes they have personal problems. Sometimes there are family problems. Some are of moral conduct; while others are emotional ones. I try to hear each person, letting them release everything that is choking them, and then counsel them in the light of God's Word, using a bit of psychology as well. And I do not forget to put each one of them before God. When necessary I refer them to someone more qualified, whether parents, their superiors, or their pastor. I feel happy and fulfilled doing this work because it is not openly seen by anyone. Since I am a very shy person I do not like people to know about it. I believe I worship God in this not-so-common way.

**Viviane:** Besides those I previously mentioned, I don't have any different ways of worshiping God. I worship Him throughout the day, talking with him, showing my gratitude for the mercy He has for us.

**Carolina:** I think that, to God, all forms are special if they come from the heart, without hypocrisy, without asking Him for something and expecting we'll receive it the next minute. It is not like making a bargain with God. A prayer from the heart is one of the best ways of worshiping Him. I do not use any special form of worship. I just use my heart.

**Rosa:** I don't see this as uncommon, but, particularly when I'm working in my *atelier* (studio), usually alone, I pray to God with words not commonly used for prayers. I extol the greatness of His love, His goodness, His kindness toward us; I talk to Him, sharing everything that bothers me, saddens me, things I have trouble accepting, understanding or even forgiving. And during that conversation, I feel His presence so strong that I can even sense Him talking to me; the peace and tranquility I feel are indescribable. I love Him above all things, and I feel that I am also loved.

**Gorete:** I think there is not a certain form or way of worshiping. Each person has her own way. I like to be silent in my room and let God speak to me, feeling His presence in my life.

**Isaura:** It is not uncommon, but this is my way of relating to God—to talk to Him in any situation, bluntly, without much repetition, without fanfare. Our dialogue is this: I speak, He answers, though I do not always listen to what He says; or when I hear, I do not always obey. Yet, I know He is always willing to listen to me and to tell me (*and often repeat*) what is best for me. We both know I'm far from being an ideal Christian and I cannot hide myself from Him; yet He calls me by my name.

These answers offer a glimpse of how women here in Brazil view and practice worship, particularly individual worship outside the church. We can corporately worship as a congregation or in a group as we sing and clap our hands, play an instrument or lead the singing. We can worship our Lord also with our offerings, with our tithes and with our prayers. However, for me, worship is so much more personal and intimate when we are alone, just God and me... And most of the time, there are no words when I am *in tune* with Him. My thoughts and my mind belong to Him; my heart and my feelings, my longings and tears, my happiness and my joy. I can worship Him with all my being—not only with the unseen (what goes on inside of me), but also with my actions—if I'm driving somewhere, or doing the dishes or picking up trash from my sidewalk. I can worship Him with all my being, in whatever I do and wherever I am.



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