

Psalm 96: Growth Group Guide

SCRIPTURE READING QUESTIONS

Before diving into the group discussion, consider these four questions as you read the text:

- **What does this passage say about God, who He is, and what He does (Father, Son, and Spirit)?**
- **What does this passage teach me about me?**
- **What comfort/challenge can I take away from this passage?**
- **How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?**

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

Loving God's People (The Community Lens)

In Psalm 96, corporate worship is a global family gathering. The psalm calls all families of the nations to ascribe glory to the Lord together, reminding us that our "One New Family" identity is designed to unite diverse believers in shared praise and worship.

- **Key Question:** "How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now?"
- **Key Question:** "What gets in the way of community with other believers?"

Looking to God's Word (The Truth Lens)

This psalm highlights our "Wealth in Christ" by contrasting the living God—who made the heavens and reigns in majesty—with worthless idols. Our secure identity rests on the truth that the Lord is coming to judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness (Psalm 96:13, CSB).

- **Key Question:** "How is God's Word challenging you?"
- **Key Question:** "What can you do to prioritize God's Word?"

PART 2: THE WALK

Listening to God's Voice (The Prayer Lens)

Psalm 96 repeatedly commands us to "sing to the Lord" and "ascribe to the Lord" the glory due His name. Walking in the Spirit involves aligning our prayers with His majesty, quieting the noise of worldly idols, and responding to His leading through posture of awe and thanksgiving.

- **Key Question:** "How is God directing you?"
- **Key Question:** "What do you need to quiet in your life to hear God better?"

Living Sent (The Mission Lens) "Declare his glory among the nations, his wondrous works among all peoples" (Psalm 96:3, CSB). The psalm emphasizes "sending capacity over seating capacity"—worship cannot be contained within the sanctuary but must spill over into everyday opportunities to proclaim His salvation to those around us.

- **Key Question:** "What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus?"
- **Key Question:** "What opportunities did you miss to tell someone about Jesus?"

GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY

- **Closing Thought:** Psalm 96 demonstrates that true worship naturally fuels global mission, urging us to exalt the reigning Creator and proclaim His salvation to a world captive to empty idols.
- **Final Action:** Identify one "worthless idol" (such as approval, comfort, or control) competing for your worship this week, and consciously replace it by giving praise to God for His righteousness.

PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

The Structural Lens

Indicative vs. Imperative:

The theological framework rests on the **Indicative** that the Lord reigns, made the heavens, and is coming in righteous judgment. The **Imperative** commands flow directly from His kingship: "sing a new song," "declare his glory," and "worship the Lord in holy splendor". Remind the group that mission and worship are joyful responses to who God already is and what He has done.

Facilitation Tips

- **Redefining Worship:** Group members might limit worship to Sunday morning music. Guide them to see that "singing a new song" and "declaring His glory" encompasses our daily lifestyle, speech, and witness in everyday spaces.
- **Identifying Modern Idols:** If members struggle to connect with verse 5 ("all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols"), help them broaden the definition of idols to include anything created that takes the place of the Creator in our hearts.

Leader Insights

- **Community:** The call to "all the families of the peoples" (v. 7) emphasizes that the "One New Family" is inherently multi-ethnic and global. Community breaks down cultural barriers when centered on Jesus.
- **Truth:** Truth exposes the emptiness of human substitutes. Proclaiming that the Lord reigns brings true stability to a world filled with chaos and uncertainty.
- **Prayer:** Prayer in Psalm 96 is expressive and posture-shaping—entering His courts with offerings and worshipping in holy splendor keeps our hearts oriented toward God's sovereignty.
- **Mission:** Worship is the goal and engine of mission. We "live sent" because God deserves praise from every neighborhood and nation, prioritizing our sending capacity over mere attendance.