



Living Out God's Vision!

CtK exists to connect all people to the life-giving message of Jesus, as we experience God, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference in our world.

Day 4, Wednesday, August 9th—Experience God

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips

Psalm 63:2-5 ESV

Have you ever lifted up your hands, not *during* worship, but *to* worship? This is new for me. In my past experience, *the praise and worship* time at church meant that we stood, sang and then sat down. Maybe, just maybe, someone would clap along. It was all so serious. And boring – almost lifeless. But then I'd go to a concert and see people clapping, dancing, shouting, whistling, and cheering to a song about riding in a truck with a girl. It just didn't seem right that I was free to express myself at a concert, but not when singing about the true source of joy with my church? Recently, I decided to give it a go and see what happens when I let myself be free to clap and raise my hands to worship at church. And you know what? It's wonderful. It feels like a natural expression of honor to lift my hands. I become more aware of His presence, I think about His great attributes, and His great love for me. I become aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit and my heart becomes eager to hear what message God has for me as I, like David says, "*let my words glorify Him and as I lift my hands as I sing.*" I feel like a child with her arms raised and hands held high, who wants to be picked up and held close in the security of strong and loving arms. My open hand with the palm facing up is a symbol of surrender and a willingness to receive.

Now, don't get me wrong, you can worship without raising your hands, clapping or swaying for sure because the most important part of worshiping isn't about what our bodies are doing or how we look, but it's to clear space for your spirit to brim over with thankfulness and joy for what God has done in your life – the power you have seen and the love that you have experienced. You worship because He brought contentment to your restlessness. You worship because He exchanged hope for despair. Your spirit, mind and body join together to worship, and as your praise rises to God, maybe your hands do, too.

Great God, today we come together as a church, wanting our corporate worship to be a visible expression of the vitality that your love brings to our souls. Your love is better than life. Without Your love, we are living dead. Feed our souls, quench our thirst. Bring out in us a spirit of praise as we overflow with thankfulness for your great love. We ask that you bless our worship leaders with the power to express your praise through music and song in a way that encourages us to pause and respond to your spirit and presence. We ask that you would also foster a habit of personal worship in our church – moments of praise and honor lifted up to you as we recognize you in big and small ways in our daily lives. We love you because you first loved us. Amen.

Anna Herendeen

