

PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*As you read Isaiah 6:1 - 8, imagine that you are Isaiah. You are experiencing an encounter with the God who is high and lifted up. The train of his robe fills the temple. You see angels with 6 wings above him shouting, "Holy, holy, holy!" The whole temple is shaking and fills with smoke. Would you enter such an encounter lightly, haphazardly or irreverently? How could you prepare for such an encounter? How could you lead someone else into such an encounter?*

The Praise and Worship Team's calling is:

### ***To prepare the congregation for an encounter with God.***

Entering the presence of a Holy, Awesome and Omnipotent God is a life-transforming experience! It is not to be taken lightly. Thus, these guiding principles are prayerfully presented to clearly communicate reasonable expectations of those appointed to lead God's people in Praise and Worship. They are intended to encourage us to attain a higher level in our service unto the Lord. They are not meant to be legalistic but rather to help us strive for the spiritual maturity and musical excellence that God deserves.

#### **Characteristics of an effective Praise and Worship team member:**

- ✓ Maintains a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus Christ through personal worship, prayer and daily Bible study
- ✓ Exhibits the fruit of the Spirit outlined in Galatians 5:22-23
- ✓ Maintains a lifestyle that accurately reflects the lordship of Jesus Christ at home, at work, at school, in the community and when ministering
- ✓ Sets a Christ-like example of a ministry-minded musician
- ✓ Remains faithful, available and teachable
- ✓ Commits the necessary time to personal practice and team rehearsals
- ✓ Fosters a high sense of unity and oneness within the ministry
- ✓ Consistently prays for the team and its members
- ✓ Serves with humility and the spirit of a servant
- ✓ Stimulates, encourages and edifies other team members
- ✓ Lovingly holds other team members accountable

#### **Team Attire**

As leaders in the forefront and ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, team members must allow the congregation to see Christ through them. Visually present yourself in a manner that honors Him. Dressing to the extremes of formal or casual attire can draw attention to you and away from Christ. You cannot afford to distract the congregation with anything that could cause them to lose focus. *As a general rule, if you are wondering whether or not you should wear a certain item or whether something might possibly distract or offend someone - just don't wear it when you are up front.*

## HOW TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL QUIET TIME

Adrian Rogers

Christianity is not a legal relationship, it is a love relationship. Ten thousand “don'ts” will never make you one iota more like the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Himself Who makes you like Him. But you need to spend time with Him. I want to give you five factors for spending some quiet time with Him each day.

### The Proper Period

You must find the right time. Your quiet time should last at least half an hour. But some time is better than no time, so if you can't start at thirty minutes, begin with ten. It should be your very best time. Don't give the Lord your leftovers. And don't try to find time - make time, and make it a priority.

### The Proper Preparation

A quiet time is fellowship with a holy God. There are a few things you can do to be prepared for this time. First, be physically alert. Find a time when the cobwebs are out of your mind and you can think clearly. Second, be mentally aware. Be focused, and know He's there. Emotion doesn't really have all that much to do with it. And third, be morally pure and clean. Some people don't have a quiet time because they feel uncomfortable looking God in the face with sin in their lives.

### The Proper Place

Find a place where you can focus. Jesus said enter into your closet and pray (see Matthew 6:6). That simply means find a place of isolation where you can shut the door on the world and open the windows to heaven. Jesus sought out places where He could be alone, and so should you.

### The Proper Provisions

In order to have an effective quiet time, you need the right tools. Here are some tools I use:

- a readable Bible - Invest in one with plenty of room to jot notes in the margins.
- a prayer journal - Expect God to give you something and write it down. Also use it to record things you're praying about.
- a notepad - Write down your daily assignments.

### The Proper Procedure

Finally, may I recommend some procedures to follow in your quiet time?

**Get still and quiet.** The Bible says in Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Focus your mind on Him. Calm down, relax, and recognize His presence. Take a deep breath and focus your thoughts on the Lord.

**Read the Bible.** It's better to start by reading the Bible than it is to start in prayer. It is more important for you to hear from God, even than for God to hear from you. God already knows all about you, but you need to know a lot more about Him.

Read the Bible for quality and not quantity. It's good to have a goal to read the Bible through in a year, or a similar goal; but that's not the purpose of your quiet time. Also, devotional books are wonderful. But again, this is not the place for them. This is the time when you simply read the Bible with an open mind.

**Meditate.** As you focus on the Word of God and meditate, let it permeate you. Ask:

- ❖ Is there a command to obey? Obey it.
- ❖ Is there a promise to claim? Claim it.
- ❖ Is there a sin to avoid? Avoid it.
- ❖ Is there a lesson to learn? Learn it.
- ❖ Is there a new truth to carry with me? Carry it.

**Record what God has given you.** Write down what God says to you and what He tells you to do. It doesn't have to be flowery. You're not writing it for publication or to impress other people.

**Now you're ready to pray.** When you pray, pour out your soul. Be natural and honest with God. Tell Him how you feel. Pray out loud. It keeps your mind on track and enables you to stay focused.

**Begin to share out of your quiet time.** God did not make us to be reservoirs; He made us to be conduits. Tell others what God is showing you.

**Finally, obey what God tells you.** Your spiritual train is running on two rails. One is revelation and the other is obedience. And if either rail stops, your train stops. Learn to obey the Word of God.

I pray these simple suggestions will help you have a daily quiet time in the presence of our loving, almighty, powerful God.

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## HELPFUL YOUTUBE VIDEOS TO WATCH

MDL - The Importance of Private Worship [pstrgolf]

Quiet Time With God: 3 Starter Steps [BerakahBeauty EbonyYael]

Personal Worship (Your Time With God) [Jeff Deyo]

Personal Worship (Your Time With God), Part 2 [Jeff Deyo]

Be Still and Know That I Am God: Creating Quiet Time with God [The Christian Meditator]

How To Have An Intimate Relationship With God, p.4 [Terri Savelle Foy]

How To Spend Time With God [familylifec]

## THINKING ABOUT BEING PART OF THE PRAISE TEAM? THINK AGAIN...

by Donna R. Patrick WORDshop Ministries Lewisville, Texas

One of the reasons King David is my favorite Biblical figure is because he knew how to construct a praise team. David did not say "Come one, come all." The scripture tells us that David appointed individuals to minister music in the Temple. (*1 Chronicles 6:31*). David knew how important it was that the proper atmosphere be set for God's house. There was so much excitement over the Ark of the Covenant being brought back to Jerusalem, that, again, musical appointments were made among the Levites. (*1 Chronicles 15:16,19,22*). Only the Levites were to carry the Ark (*1 Chronicles 15:2*), just as God had done in Moses' lifetime (*Deuteronomy 10:8*).

Many of our churches today have praise teams formed to stand before the people and minister music to usher the congregation into the presence of God. In this article I will give us some things to think about when forming a praise team. I also hope to speak to those who aspire to be a part of that team.

It should be understood first that the praise team must be made up of praisers and worshipers. Membership on the praise team does not make you a praiser - you should have already made it a habit long before you get to the team. Why? I can answer that question with a question: How can you lead people somewhere you have not been yourself? The team is not the place to learn to be a praiser and a worshiper - you need to already be there. Worship is a daily pursuit - praise is an ongoing journey and your life must demonstrate that. By the time you belong to a praise team you must have raised your praise and worship to God to the level of habit. It has become your lifeblood, along with reading and study of God's Word. This requires not only salvation through Jesus Christ, but there needs to be an **ongoing relationship** with Him. Our daily walk as Christians does not stop at the point of salvation; it is only the beginning.

Praise team membership is not for the timid. In other words if you are afraid to stand before the people and uncomfortable with open expressions of praise, then these would need to be overcome before you consider being part of the team. The team is a place of enthusiasm and high energy when warranted. The people are looking to you for leadership. There are many scripture references to praising God in the congregation of the saints. Among them are *Psalms 134:2; Psalm 107:32; and Psalm 35:18*.

There are individuals who want to join the praise team so everyone will see them. This is the wrong motive for team membership. Proverbs 16:2 says in paraphrase "all of man's ways are right in his own eyes, but God weighs the motives". The responsibility of leadership is far too important and it cannot be taken for granted. When leading people into God's presence the anointing of the Holy Spirit is vital. And we cannot wait until we arrive at the church on Sunday morning to ask God's anointing. Is this really "in spirit and in truth" worship? (*John 4:24*) God deserves more from us. David acknowledged in *Psalms 51:6b* that God desires truth from us. We must in the days leading up to Sunday spend time in God's presence allowing Him to prepare our hearts to come before the people. As a praise team we should be examples of God's holiness. The Word says we are temples of the Holy Ghost and He dwells within us (*1 Corinthians 6:19*).

There are individuals who aspire to be part of the praise team because they sing well. If I had to choose between the habitual praiser and the great singer, I'll take the habitual praiser. The great singer may prove more concerned about how he/she presents to the people, rather than how he/she presents to God. It is the principle of image vs. integrity. Image says "How did I sound to the people?" Integrity says "How did I sound to God?" The praise team should never function to bring attention to ourselves - but to God. I should point out here that music is not the chief function of the praise and worship portion of the service anyway. If we had no music, the worship of God ought to still be Job One. But since we do use music as a vehicle into God's presence, we must be very careful that neither our music nor our team members are there merely for outward showings. While the Word of God offers several references to singing, John 4:24, our chief criterion for worship, makes no reference to it at all. All throughout the church of Jesus Christ at large, we have become so conditioned and so traditionalized to the extent we have come to believe music and worship are synonymous; they are not. Singing all the great songs by the most talented and well-known artists does not guarantee worship.

Personally, I could never support volunteerism when it comes to praise team membership. Prospective praise team members must be interviewed, taught, and made to understand the critically important role they will play in standing before the people to minister praise and worship. No matter how willing potential members may be, proper motives among these individuals must be well-determined prior to making decisions on whether they will be a part of the team. Our responsibility to lead God's people into His presence is much too important to leave it to individuals who do not have a heart of worship.

Finally there needs to be unity and mutual love for one another among the team. Dissention among the members will prove obvious to the congregation. Even though our function is not to be seen, we are seen by many, many sets of eyes on any given Sunday, and our projection needs to be that of oneness. We should demonstrate our love for God and for our fellow team members. Praise team members should pray for, support, and be there for one another. This is why it is important to know the hearts of prospective team members; know something of their salvation experience, and how their lives reflect the mind of Christ. And this is why aspiring praise team members should be prayed over and chosen by the Holy Spirit.

If you are a musician/worship leader charged with building or rebuilding your praise team, seek the Lord first and foremost. Allow Him to show you those persons who would make for a strong, solid unit to minister in your church. If you are a praise team hopeful, please be prayerful about this. Be honest with yourself and God and consider whether this is the ministry God has led you into.

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## Our calling: *To prepare the congregation for an encounter with God.*

(Scripture References John 4:23 - 24, Psalm 95:1 - 7)

### Praise Team Food For Thought

- As you stand before the congregation, let your praise be:
  - Genuine - *an outward expression of your own personal relationship with the Lord*
  - Inviting - *draws those who see you to want to praise and worship the Lord with you*
  - Infectious - *the listener can't resist becoming a participant*
- We *praise* God for what He's done. We *worship* Him for who He is. Our songs should fit one of those categories.
- Prayerfully make a plan. Know who is leading what and when. (I Corinthians 14:33a, 40)
- When leading, feed the words to the congregation. Make it easy for them to participate.
- Use inviting language such as "Let's stand to our feet as we honor our great God." vs "If you love the Lord, stand up."
- Don't be offensive. You'll make the congregation defensive. (Proverbs 15:1)
- Don't fuss at the congregation! "Ya'll ain't praisin' the Lord!" (Ephesians 4:31 - 32)
- When you read a scripture, read it with life! (Hebrews 4:12)
- Avoid empty clichés such as "when praises go up, blessings come down." Instead, quote appropriate scriptures such as Psalm 33:1; 34:3; 47:1; 92:1; 134:2; 147:1; etc.
- Keep song transitions smooth but not mechanical. Try a scripture to introduce the next song rather than saying "Our next song is..."
- Define words such as exalt, glorify, magnify, awesome, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha, etc.
- Focus your Praise and Worship time prayers on praise and worship.
- Remember this - prayer is talking to God, not talking at the congregation or the devil.
- Be excited and overflowing with energy and enthusiasm!
- Each person should assume responsibility for engaging a particular section of the congregation.
- Maintain good posture and positive body language.
- Be sensitive to your congregation's needs.



Excerpts from  
**PREPARATION FOR PRAISE**

An instructional session with *Byron Cage* at the Metroplex Interdenominational Worship Consortium's  
 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Music & Worship Conference in Dallas, TX September 10, 1999

Worship is a privileged posture. John 4:23 - 24 says that the Father is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Everybody can praise the Lord but not just anybody can worship the Lord. In order to worship Him in spirit, you must know Him in His divine nature (who he is, his attributes, the things that make him God). In order to worship Him in truth, you must know His biblical mandates (the things he has mandated and ordained in the scriptures). A worshipper has a relationship with the Lord, is in tune to the Lord and is tapped-in to the power source.

✍ We should be less concerned about entertainment and more concerned about touching the heart of God. (Look at David - a man after God's own heart. In Psalm 42, he longed for God's presence.)

► **The Old Dispensation Of Worship** ◀

(see Exodus 25 - 30) You could not just come into the presence of the Lord. God gave Moses a strategic plan for what needed to happen. The Outer Court, The Inner Court and The Most Holy Place.

The Outer Court - contained the altar of sacrifice where the priest, Levites and elders would sacrifice the animal. The praise people would sing in the Outer Court.

The Inner Court contained the brazen laver where the High Priest would wash his hands. Only the High Priest along with those who were called could go into the Inner Court. The golden lamp stand represented God as light. The table of showbread represented God as nourishment - how He fed them in the wilderness. The altar of incense - a sweet smelling savor.

The Most Holy Place - (separated by a veil) contained the Ark of The Covenant (shaped like a communion table) which held the Ten Commandments, manna from the wilderness, Aaron's rod and two cherubim on top. Between the cherubim was the Mercy Seat of God. Only the High Priest could go into the Most Holy Place. What happened when someone else came in? (see Leviticus 10) This is where God would reveal to the High Priest what He wanted His people to know.

However, after Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrifice, there was no more need for the Outer Court experience. There was no more need for the Inner Court because He is our nourishment. The veil of the temple (in The Most Holy Place) was rent from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51) which gives us immediate access to God. (Hallelujah!) This is the privileged posture.

✍ "What is this strange noise I hear?" Is God receiving our praise just because we say, "Praise the Lord" or lift our hands? (see Isaiah 1:10 - 20) There is a lifestyle that goes along with worship. If we believe He is the King of kings and we're His, we don't mind trying to live the best we can. You can't do whatever you want to do, when you want to do it and think that since you sing in the choir, lift your hands and make everybody jump that God's anointing is on your life. We're getting emotions, we're celebrating the talent of people but do we ever really touch the heart of God?

✍ Stop all the clichés like, “When the praises go up, blessings come down.” The Bible says God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). So when we praise Him, not only do the blessings come down but He comes down. And when He comes down, we get blessing, healing, deliverance, provision, purpose or whatever we stand in need of!

✍ The people know whether or not you’ve been in the presence of the Lord. (whether you’ve touched heaven or you just came up with a couple of cute phrases to say)

✍ The more we study about God, the more we are qualified to stand before the people of God and share what it is that God has to say. (not to show off, give them a 1-2-3 “knock ‘em, sock ‘em”, “bring everybody to a shout” song) You need to know how to stand before the people of God and proclaim what God has said.

### ► **Qualifications for Praise Team Members** ◄

- Must have a private relationship with the Lord. Give Him the time He deserves. Sit at His feet. (Luke 10:38 - 42) More than 5 minutes a day or more than a daily devotion one day a week.
- Be able to carry a tune. Not necessarily the best singers. Just because you’re a great singer doesn’t mean you’re a good worshipper. The people should celebrate God and not your talent.
- Have boldness. Look at the people as you lead them in worship!
- Be prepared. You can’t go to the late show on Saturday night like everybody else. Get plenty of sleep. Get up early enough to study the scriptures and spend time alone with God asking Him what He wants you to say to His people.
- Pray together before the service.
- Don’t allow the congregation to disrespect God. How would they honor a judge in his courtroom? We are entering the presence of a holy God. Does Almighty God deserve any less than an earthly judge?
- We either have a ministry or a mess! There is no in-between. Either God is being glorified, saints are being edified or we have a mess.
- We need to teach our people, not beat them up. (*What’s wrong with ya’ll today?*) “*Ain’t the Lord been good to you?*” That ain’t God, you’re just mad! Teach them like you would a student.
- (The “Gimme” mentality.) We often praise God only when He gives us something. What happens during those drought periods? We should praise him for who He is. (see Psalm 34:1)
- Keep the songs simple. Always assume the congregation doesn’t know the words. Feed them the lyrics before each phrase.
- The songs on Sunday morning should be sacred and conducive to worship. They should prepare the people to hear from God.
- How do you lead Praise and Worship when you don’t feel like it? (Burn out) Be honest with the Lord. Tell Him how you feel and ask Him to help you and to restore you. Take time out for consecration. Shut out all distractions. Ask Him to take you to the next level.



## PLATFORM APPAREL TIPS

By Debbi Barnett, *Worship Leader*    [www.experiencingworship.com](http://www.experiencingworship.com)

*"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God." (1 Timothy 2: 9-10)*

Some of our worship ministries have very strict dress codes and some of us may not have a dress code at all. The fact still remains we, as leaders, cannot really wear what we want on the platform. We must choose our clothing with wisdom and dress appropriately for the position. Every job description has a dress code, and we are no different. I have come up with a couple of tips for platform dress. Each church has its own set of rules, and I have seen very liberal and very conservative situations.

Remember this, you are a role model and when Miss 'Just Got Saved' wants to join the team or choir and all she has in her closet is "street wear" what are you going to do? Your spiritual inner man/woman tells you what to put on and what not to put on, and she's not there yet. Perhaps this list of tips can help you figure out what would be acceptable and not acceptable for platform wear. Let's get down to the basics and look at the ABC's of platform wear. Of course, this is my list and you may want to add to it. If all else fails, run your concerns by your Worship Pastor, Pastor, or pastors' wives as to what would fit your particular situation.

The last thing I want to do is mother you and tell you what you should and should not wear. However, there are a couple of things that I've had to deal with, as well as some things I have gained through personal experience and embarrassment. If you can't use this information, pass it on to someone who can. I know that there are some out there who have never been told, and I would be doing you a disservice if I did not mention it.

An older woman in the ministry told me years ago that I should wear a sackcloth dress in order that I would not bring attention to myself when I ministered. I said "no way," but I understood the humbleness of her heart. She was a woman given to dressing well, and she needed to be humbled by the Holy Spirit and she wanted to pass on some wisdom. Please note that my intention is not to offend anyone, but some things need to be talked about and this is our arena. Sooner or later you will have to deal with these issues!

**A.** Always wear a bra - it is a distraction for the guys because they can't worship! Why would you not want to wear one anyway? Make sure you are covered up properly. Don't embarrass others, or yourself, by wearing something transparent. Remember Geena Davis? Things look different under bright lights.

**B.** Bring the right shoes to worship in. You really can't dance before the Lord with high heels.

**C.** Hygiene - Keep a dental hygiene kit at church (toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.) If it's your time of the month, keep extra clothing and supplies on hand. Accidents will happen. Don't forget your deodorant - BO is worse than a bad hair day!

**D.** Come prepared for anything - if your dress code requires you to wear panty hose, bring an extra pair so you can lead worship and not worry about the run you just got.

**E.** Modesty - Don't even think about that slit up the side of your skirt or dress, it's a distraction. Every woman would be embarrassed if they knew they were exposing themselves to the congregation - It bears repeating I've been there!

- F.** Focus on what the Lord wants to do through you to His people.
- G.** Get advice from an older woman who has been active in ministry - someone you can trust to give you wisdom about things. Adopt a church Mom or Aunt
- H.** Have a laugh ready - sometimes you'll put your clothes on backwards or inside out or you'll miss a button.
- I.** Insist on putting a Department Ministry Manual in place to avoid confusion on issues like this and more in the future - Put things in black and white.
- J.** Jewelry - too much jewelry is a distraction, Jesus is the reason that we sing and the focus is not our jewelry! I'm sorry but earrings in the nose and anywhere else except in the ear is a distraction. (I love jewelry - I personally wear a toe ring and it draws attention)
- K.** Keep your eyes on Jesus and your heart pure before Him, ask Him to show you if you need to improve in any area – when people look in your eyes they will see a light and your words will lead them to the Rock of our Salvation. Point #2 Keep your hair in good shape, keep it conditioned and styled nicely, - Bad Hair days are the worst!
- L.** Leave your tight clothing and low neck lines at home – It's a distraction
- M.** Make sure you always wear a slip under your dresses and skirts. Point #2 – Make-up – little is best. (I personally love to wear it; I also cry a lot so waterproof is the best way to go. If you don't wear make-up that's ok too. You don't dishonor God by wearing a little.
- N.** Never say this stuff does not apply to me – ask someone you trust to tell you the truth about your clothing.
- O.** Offer to go shopping with a young lady who doesn't know any better. Better yet clean out your closet and give them to someone who needs them.
- P.** Pastors (men) find it difficult to correct women on these issues don't make it harder for them.
- Q.** Quit thinking about not having enough money to re-stock your closet – God will supply your needs according to His riches in glory.
- R.** Rest - take a Sabbath and get your beauty sleep. Don't stay up late at night, your voice will take the beating, not to mention it's hard to hear the Holy Spirit speak when you are sleepy or tired.
- S.** Sing to the Lord for His has been good to you!
- T.** Take advantage of any classes that deal with Women in Ministry - you'll gain wisdom and insight from the sisterhood. Point #2 (If you have tattoos, try your best to cover them up especially if they are huge - they can be a distraction. If not, don't get in bondage. The deal is to not bring attention to yourself but to God)
- U.** U-R fearfully and wonderfully made - you may want to show it off but save it for your husband not the congregation! Always wear underwear I don't care how hot it gets where you live.
- V.** Visit [www.experiencingworship.com](http://www.experiencingworship.com) often and tell your friends it's a good site!
- W.** Work at learning why we worship and then teach someone about it.
- X.** X (I don't know) I could stretch it and say exercise...
- Y.** You are the right woman for the job - be comfortable in that.
- Z.** Z - get plenty of Z's, it's our beauty sleep.

## SHOULD WE ALLOW UNSKILLED MUSICIANS ON THE WORSHIP TEAM?

By Neil Oldham, *Worship Leader* [www.worshipleader.com](http://www.worshipleader.com)

"If they want to play or sing, let 'em. We're a church, for crying out loud, not a communist regime!" says Jim Bob. Betsy Sue replies, "Yes we're a church and God deserves our very best. That's why we should only hire professionals to lead our worship." Ahhhh yes, the battle between involvement and excellence! It's one of a million conflicts that play out within and between churches every week.

But - as with most such tension-issues in the church - the challenge facing us is not how to "knockout" one or the other but, rather, how to strike the right balance between the two. There is no clear-cut formula or solution that fits every church. There's not even a solution that fits every single situation bound to arise in *your* church.

Still, each worship ministry does need to determine which value - involvement or excellence - will win most often or carry the most weight. In churches of 500-ish or less people, where most of us reside, we tend to have a natural and inherited bent toward letting involvement win. Our smaller environments tend to naturally develop family-like cultures. That kind of culture can easily lend itself toward a more laissez faire, unrestrictive mindset. Many of our ministry settings would see uprisings if worship leaders suddenly began requiring musician applications, try-outs, and/or lengthy apprenticeship programs!

In light of this bent toward involvement, I'd like to make a case for excellence. I chose to emphasize excellence over involvement long ago and have never had cause to regret it. My church has a core value statement that reads: "Excellence honors God and draws people." I believe that's true. And, by the way, it seems King David did, too, when he organized Israel's worship ministry using skilled and qualified musicians (I Chronicles 25)

Here are a few myths that commonly hold us back from valuing excellence as we should. Maybe you've heard them or are even thinking one or two, yourself:

**Myth #1: If someone wanting to sing/play is turned down due to a lack of skill, they might be offended or even leave.** This is actually true, they might. I list it as a myth because it ignores another, even more disquieting reality: If you let them participate in spite of their lack of ability, others may leave and guests may never return. Why should this person's ill-founded ambition be prioritized above the opportunity to minister to those others?

**Myth #2: We'll seem judgmental and not very Christ-like.** Only if you go about it the wrong way. For certain, valuing excellence over involvement can be a challenging undertaking! One day, a new believer in whom you've been investing deeply may ask you to involve their son who can't keep a beat to save his life. Choosing excellence in situations similar to this becomes heart wrenching, as someone's fragile faith may seemingly hang in the balance. But scripture is full of great wisdom on how to handle conflict in a godly manner. Let's be careful to heed that guidance and lead strong because the hard calls are worth making when your values are on the line.

**Myth #3: My church just doesn't have the people or resources to do music with excellence.** Technology is beginning to render this statement completely null and void. For example, check out [worshipbandinhand.com](http://worshipbandinhand.com) (maybe you could only afford to buy one song at a time through this service but, even so, you'd be making progress). Or just seek advice from someone you trust - someone in your community or region with experience in extracting excellence from humble circumstances. You can even contact me directly through my site and I'd be glad to connect with you about your unique situation or maybe even write a post about it.

To be clear, I'm not advocating for some elitist involvement scheme or for using techy worship tools to kick your church's musicians to the curb. But I am saying that, to the extent we emphasize involvement at the expense of excellence, we are left with ministries that are less God-honoring or people-drawing than they should be.

## **WORSHIP LEADERS NEED TO WORSHIP**

(From "The Worship Leader's Handbook." Tom Kraeuter, (c) 1997 Training Resources, Inc., Hillsboro, MO., 314.789.4522. Used by permission of Emerald Books, Lynnwood, Wash.)

As a worship leader, do you sometimes feel that you are so concerned about getting everything to flow properly and leading others in worship that you sometimes feel like you missed worshipping God? This seems to be a common problem for worship leaders.

Reasons that it is hard to worship while leading:

### ◆ LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE MUSIC ◆

It is difficult - at best - to concentrate on the Lord when you are concentrating on the music. To help this, you must work at the music on a consistent basis. This means practicing the songs (in the various keys you will be using, including modulations ... practicing chord progressions ... performing technical work with your instrument and voice, etc.) There is no way around this technical aspect of worship leadership.

### ◆ LACK OF PREPARATION ◆

As a worship leader, you need to have a plan - in conjunction with the pastor - as to the direction of the service. In this way, your leading will be more focused. Remember: it's perfectly alright to plan ahead. God can guide and direct you just as easily before the service as He can during it. Nowhere does Scripture suggest that "spontaneity" is a guarantee that the Holy Spirit is leading.

### ◆ LACK OF PERSONAL WORSHIP IN PRIVATE ◆

You cannot do in front of people in worship leadership what is missing from your private life. If you worship God on your own Monday through Saturday, your worship will flow more easily on Sunday. Seeing praise and worship as a lifestyle is a real key to effectively leading praise and worship. This includes consistent Bible Study and prayer and seeking the Lord and His guidance for your life, business, family, and ministry decisions.

### ◆ LACK OF CONNECTEDNESS FOR THE MOMENT ◆

Seek God's guidance as you perform your part of the worship service with a humble heart. Keep in mind that it is worship, and not a performance.

### ◆ LACK OF TEAM BUILDING ◆

It is a good idea for those involved in the worship ministry to spend time together praying before the service. This may include:

- Praying for each other's needs and concerns,
- Lifting up the service you will be leading, that the team will be able to flow together as a unit and that God will be glorified through the team,
- interceding for the congregation to be prepared to meet with God and open to what He wants to do.

It is vital that the worship leaders actually worship while leading, but if they become so completely lost in God that they forget about the people, then they have missed part of their responsibility. On the other hand, if they are so focused on the people that they miss worshipping the Lord, then they have also missed a major part of their worship. It is truly a fine line!

## STILL MORE TIPS FOR LEADING WORSHIP

*author unknown*

1. Worship leaders, ask yourself while choosing songs and arranging a set list (and even choosing musicians), "What is the purpose of this?" You may say it is to bring people into worship of God, but everyone says that. Look at your songs, look at your arrangements, look at the people assisting you. Are they all on board with that purpose?
2. The vast majority of your congregation is not musically savvy. They need to be able to follow where you're leading. So don't get fancy. If you change keys, take long pauses, run words together, change tempos, go too high or too low, or don't provide a way for those who don't know the words to know what they're singing, you may lose them. It may make for a great performance, highlighting the great skill and talent of you and your musicians, but worship is not a concert.
3. On that note, keep it simple. This does not mean simplistic. Contrary to popular belief, repetition is not bad. It is helpful, actually. Droning or mindless repetition is bad. But the repetition of a chorus or melody is helpful for congregants who shouldn't have to focus on keeping up with you.
4. Remove yourself from the presentation as much as possible. Are you a rock star? Cut it out.
5. Beware of banter. Good worship leaders develop sensitive and strategic ways to shepherd their people into the worship experience. This may include explaining songs or reflecting on their meanings. Maybe it means quoting or reading Scripture. It should include interspersed prayer. It could mean a lot of things, but refrain from speechifying, from lapsing into some extended pontification between songs. Save the preaching for the preacher.
6. When you banter, be mindful of what you say. Is "Are you guys ready to have fun tonight?!" a good way to begin a worship set? It is not wrong or bad for worshipers to enjoy themselves in worship; indeed, they should. But is "fun" what you really want to call their attention to when you begin?
7. Words matter. And they matter beyond their poetic quality. What do the lyrics of the songs you're singing say about God and about the Christian life? They do not have to be systematic theology set to music -- and they probably shouldn't be -- but neither should they be vapid or borderline meaningless. It may sound pretty, but does it reflect sound doctrine?
8. Songs that highlight the gospel (sin, grace) should be treasured.
9. Music matters. Your lyrics can be straight from Scripture, but if the music is kitschy, you are condescending to your congregation. You're not a Carnival Cruise Line, you're in the community of Christ-followers. Your lyrics may be easy to follow and substantive, but coupled with complex, "artistic" music, and you may be singing a song best suited for performance, not corporate worship.



**10.** Be mindful that you are leading a congregation in worship, which typically and ideally means a cross-section of men and women, youth and old folks, etc. Some, if not most, men may be uncomfortable singing about "going into the King's chamber" and kissing on Jesus. Some women may be uncomfortable singing about God smiting his enemies with furious vengeance. I think, actually, there are places in worship for both sorts of songs (just as Scripture contains all sorts of portraits of our God), but be sensitive to your congregation's needs, not necessarily to your own wants. Frequently certain types of songs resonate more with leaders and they can obsess on them; this is great if the "type" is a general theo-centric worship song, but it is bad if the type is a "making out with Jesus at Inspiration Point" worship song.

**11.** If you lead in a majority white congregation, telling people to "put your hands together" during a song can go terribly wrong.

**12.** Not all songs are created equal. Some songs may be incredibly worshipful but are not conducive to corporate worship. I love U2's "Where the Streets Have No Name;" I find it very worshipful. But it is not a good song for corporate worship. You want worship songs that can be sung along to, not just songs that can be sung.

**13.** When possible, choose songs for your set list that connect to or reflect the theme or message points of the sermon. This may not always be possible, but it does enhance the perception of the worship time as part of a whole service of worship, rather than as a stand-alone element in a program.

**14.** Talk and work with whoever you have to get creative with the worship service format. If you always do worship first, talk about placing the message first and worship last. And vice versa. If you have a set routine that works for your church, great. But when done in sensitive and strategic ways -- as opposed to abrupt and chaotic ways -- the rearranging of worship elements can provoke congregants to really focus on the worship service.

**15.** Some people will say don't sing about us. I would tell them to read the Psalms. The key is not to not sing about "us," it is to sing songs that tell the truth about us. Instead of singing about how God makes us feel, why not sing songs about our dependence on Him? Instead of singing songs celebrating the great things we have done and will do for God (which is just self-worship, actually), how about singing songs about the depth of our need and the falling short of our efforts that celebrate the great things God has done? It's not the pronouns "I" and "we" that should be avoided; it's certain verbs that follow them.

**16.** Trust the Spirit, not yourself.

**17.** Exalt Christ.

Adapted from  
**WHAT MAKES A WORSHIP TEAM “TIGHT”?**  
*Mike and Terry Kinard*

Vocalists, musicians and technical support under the anointing of the Holy Spirit should inspire the congregation to enter the presence of the Lord and join the celebration that the Music Ministry leads. Do you desire to be a good steward of your Music Ministry gift? If so, commit to self-education in all aspects of your area of expertise and the associated musical skills that sharpen that gift. Numerous tools are readily available to you for musical growth and skill enhancement. First, LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN to other high quality, skillful singing groups. This is one of the most crucial habits you can develop to fine-tune your gift. Make a commitment to practice your instrument away from the group’s weekly rehearsal. Invest in your God-given talent by purchasing books, videos, tapes, computer programs, CDs and DVDs that offer skillful instruction.

As you sacrifice to sharpen your gift, watch and see if God will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out an abundant blessing!

### **Characteristics of a “Musically Tight” Worship Team:**

#### **Vocalists:**

1. Make a personal commitment to excellence. We serve a God who is excellent and deserves nothing less than your excellence.
2. Refuse to accept or settle for mediocrity.
3. Know your own voice, range, strengths and weaknesses. Commit to expanding your capabilities through individual practice and study.
4. Since blending is the number one assignment for vocalists, learn to blend with other choir members to achieve a “one voice” sound. If you cannot hear the voices on either side of you while singing, either you are singing too loud or they are not singing loud enough. Help each other be the best. Remember that vibrato will make your voice stand out so sing with an even tone.
5. Make eye contact with the congregation as much as possible during worship. This connection is very important as it forms a bond and encourages the congregation to participate rather than spectate.
6. Sing with an open mouth to allow sounds to resonate clearly and distinctly. Smiling will help lift your sound and project a bright, joyous spirit which encourages others to join in.
7. Be a vocal student. Develop excellent habits of posture, breathing, relaxing and timing your breaths. This will greatly increase your ability to add expression to your music and communicate a song’s message effectively.
8. Know the lyrics, dynamics, key changes, endings and the message of each song so that reading the lyrics becomes unnecessary.
9. Be spiritually in tune and sensitive to God and the leading of his Holy Spirit.

**SELAH**

(pause and calmly think on that)

*“The Music Ministry is not the right of the talented, but rather a privilege extended to the committed.” Bob Sorge*

*“What you do in your spirit is God’s first concern, because everything else will flow out of that.” Tony Evans*

*“If we experience God but we don’t express it, then that experience returns void ... Likewise, if we are expressing God’s goodness without experiencing it on our own, chances are the expression we are offering is hollow and empty.”*  
www.developingworship.com

*“We should be less concerned about entertainment and more concerned about touching the heart of God.” Byron Cage*

*“Fulfillment of excellence in ministry is not in the abundance of desire ... but diligence to preparation.” Bernard R. Gillott III*

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*  
Jesus Christ (John 4:23-24 NIV)

*“If we are striving for excellence MUSICALLY but are ignoring the SPIRITUAL aspect of worship, we exclude God. If we are striving for excellence SPIRITUALLY, but ignore the MUSICAL aspect of worship we will be offending God and our listeners.” John Barbour*

*“In true worship, God is preeminent and the center of our attention. Conversely, in false worship I am preeminent and the center of attention.”*  
David Morris

## WHY DO WE HAVE PRAISE & WORSHIP?

Refocus. That's why we invite you to participate in Praise & Worship each Sunday. Each of us is bombarded throughout the week with negativity and bad news. Violence and blight in our communities, a high unemployment rate, an economic downturn, families in dysfunction, high inflation and low morals and the list goes on and on.

However, when you redirect your focus from the stresses and cares of life and focus your attention on the God of the universe, your spirit will be renewed, replenished and rejuvenated! When you focus on how He has overcome the world, you can be of good cheer. In Him, you have victory! In Him, you are more than a conqueror!

**WORSHIP HIM** because of who He is. Worship Him because of His attributes or the things that make Him God: He is holy. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. He doesn't change. He is love. He is merciful and just. He is my provider. He is my peace. He is awesome!

**PRAISE HIM** for what He has done and is doing: He saved me. He delivered me. He chose me. He blesses me. He protects me. He meets my needs. He comforts me. He keeps me. He loves me!

Don't you want to be renewed, replenished and rejuvenated today? Participate in Praise and Worship because mere spectators don't experience these benefits.