

Preparing for and Evaluating the Worship Service

Ten questions for evaluating corporate worship.

1. Is our Savior's substitutionary sacrifice on the Cross clearly and repeatedly presented through song lyrics and exhortations as central to our worship and the means by which we approach God?
2. Is it evident to the church and guests that all we do is rooted in Scripture and in response to Scripture?
3. Do we devote sufficient time to preparation and practice prior to Sunday, and encouragement and evaluation after Sunday?
4. Is there a recognizable theme for our corporate worship which is clearly communicated and grounded in objective truth about God?
5. Are we listening for and responsive to the spontaneous direction of the Holy Spirit during corporate worship?
6. Do our spoken and musical transitions serve to connect different elements of corporate worship in a natural and meaningful way?
7. Has our song selection and presentation become predictable? Does our song repertoire reflect songs of different styles, emphases, and lengths?
8. Are the pastors and worship team an example to the church of passionate, expressive, and responsive worship?
9. Are we aware of and appropriately sensitive to guests who may not be familiar with our terminology, style and practice?
10. Does our description and expression of corporate worship reinforce the understanding that it complements, rather than replaces, a lifestyle of worship?

I could comment on any one of these, but that would be unwise...Let me just suggest that if you're a leader, I'd suggest you apply #3 immediately if you're not doing it already. Here's how it's worked for us.

We now have two meetings on Sunday mornings, at 9 and 11:30 AM. They each last about 90 minutes. Rehearsal typically takes place on Saturday night from 6:30-8:00. That way we can come in Sunday mornings at 8 for 30 minutes of tweaking. Practicing the night before has enabled us to keep things fresh in our minds for Sunday morning.

Our musicians meet on stage after our first meeting each Sunday to talk about what went well and what didn't. We've tried to cultivate a culture of humility and encouragement that enables people to point out where others did something right and eagerly receive input when they didn't do something well. I might comment on the drummer's tempo, a bad transition, or commend the group for following a change in the plan. No one is looking to "pin the blame" on anyone. We

frequently laugh at how things didn't working out quite like we practiced, knowing that God is gracious to use idiots like us! We try to learn from our mistakes and repeat what we do right. There are times we're not quite sure *what* went wrong. But the cumulative effect of those evaluation times have been invaluable. In addition our pastoral team reviews each Sunday on Wednesday mornings. We don't take a lot of time to nit-pick, but we do talk about what was effective and what wasn't. It's helped us be more aware of our responsibility to direct people's hearts and minds each Sunday to our glorious Savior.