
THE TASK OF THE WORSHIP LEADER

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I. Introduction

A. Some common misconceptions.

1. The modern worship leader is a clearly biblical role.
2. The worship leader has to be musically gifted.
3. Worship leading is always the responsibility of one individual.

B. Why continue to talk about “worship leaders?”

1. Not going away any time soon.
2. Emphasizes the opportunity we have each week to lead the church to magnify the glory of God in their lives.

C. Other options:

- a. Use different terms to describe the person leading the singing.
- b. Redefine the role to raise the standard.

*A faithful worship leader
magnifies the greatness of God in Jesus Christ
through the power of the Holy Spirit
by skillfully combining God’s Word with music,
thereby motivating the gathered church
to proclaim the gospel, to cherish God’s presence,
and to live for God’s glory.*

II. **A faithful worship leader...**

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. (1Cor. 4:1-2)

A. We must fight the temptation to be “more” than faithful

B. Our leading is intentional.. (Rom. 12:6-8)

1. Worship in spirit and truth doesn’t simply “happen.”
2. We are leading people into a fresh awareness of who God is, what He has done, and how that affects our past, present, and future.

III. *...magnifies the greatness of God...*

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. (Ps. 145:1-3)

Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together! (Ps. 34:3)

- A. We magnify God's greatness like a telescope, not a microscope.
1. Our primary goal in corporate worship and in life is the exaltation of God's greatness in our minds and hearts.
 2. God never changes. What changes is our awareness of His eternal nature and ongoing activity.
 3. Magnifying the worth of God involves specifically presenting Who He is and what He has done in a compelling, appealing manner.

“All true worship is a response to the self-revelation of God in Christ and Scripture, and arises from our reflection on who He is and what He has done....The worship of God is evoked, informed, and inspired by the vision of God....The true knowledge of God will always lead us to worship. (John Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, pg. 250)

- B. God has revealed his greatness in his Word, his nature, and his works.

IV. *...in Jesus Christ...*

- A. There is no biblical worship apart from faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. (John 4:23-24; Heb. 10:19-22)
1. For access to God
 2. For acceptable worship
 3. For God's glory
 4. For participating in heaven's worship
- B. The glory of God and the redemptive work of Christ can't be separated.
- For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:6)
- C. Our proclamation of Christ and his finished work must be consistent, clear, and compelling.

V. ...through the power of the Holy Spirit...

- A. Worship of God is impossible apart from the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Phil. 3:3 For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—*

- B. This involves desperate dependence, eager expectation, and humble responsiveness.
- C. We should never limit the Spirit's power and work to certain gifts.
- D. Involves listening for the direction of the Holy Spirit before, during and at the close of the meeting.

“For Paul the gathered church was first of all a worshiping community; and the key to their worship was the presence of the Holy Spirit.” (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, pg. 884)

1. We are diligent to plan without being ruled by our plan.
2. We must resist growing familiar with what we do. (**songs, format, setting, sound, congregation**)

VI. ...by skillfully combining God's Word...

- A. If a church is to be Spirit-led it must be Word-fed.
- B. God's Word has always governed, filled, and fueled the worship he desires.

God must speak to us before we have any liberty to speak to him. He must disclose to us who he is before we can offer him what we are in acceptable worship. The worship of God is always a response to the Word of God. Scripture wonderfully directs and enriches our worship. (John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, 174)

- C. Various ways to esteem God's Word when we meet:
1. Have your Bible with you when you lead
 2. Read Scripture, long and short passages
 3. Sing songs saturated with God's Word
 4. Give Biblically based exhortations

VII. ...with music...

- A. Music should serve the lyrics. “Truth outlasts tunes.” (Col. 3:16)
 - 1. Sing songs that say something.
 - 2. Adjust your musical arrangements and volume.
 - 3. Use instrumental solos wisely.
 - 4. Project lyrics.
 - 5. Use supportive music.

- B. Music should display variety.
 - 1. Reflects God’s various attributes.
 - 2. Enables varied responses.
 - 3. Helps us to hear familiar words in a fresh way.
 - 4. Reflects God’s heart for all people.
 - 5. How much variety depends on the resources of a local church.
 - 6. There will most often be a musical center.

- C. Music should edify the church.
 - 1. My iPod isn’t my best source when choosing songs for Sunday.
 - 2. We should give God our “best” music, meaning music that enables people to consistently and genuinely magnify the greatness of the Savior in their hearts, minds, and wills.

VIII. *Thereby motivating the gathered church...*

- A. Not demanding the gathered church.
- B. Not manipulating the gathered church.
- C. Not projecting guilt upon the gathered church.
- D. Motivating by grace.
 - 1. Presenting a compelling picture of God and his greatness
 - 2. Leading from personal knowledge and humility
 - 3. The imperative should always be rooted in the indicative.

Where the light of revelation is not accompanied by spiritual experience and power in our souls, then it will end either in outward formality or atheism. (John Owen, *The Glory of Christ*, pg. 115)

IX. To proclaim the gospel...

- A. There is nothing more important than this for us to proclaim with our lips and our lives: Christ Jesus died in our place for our sins to bring us to God.
- B. We must help people understand how the gospel connects to their daily lives.
- C. We must labor to be personally affected by the gospel so our proclamation is genuine and not superficial.

X. To cherish God's presence...

- A. Enjoy God's promised presence. (preaching, prayer, fellowship, communion, etc)
- B. Pursue God's active presence. (spiritual gifts, spontaneous prayer,)
- C. Anticipate God's unveiled presence. (no more limits on time, strength, and our perceptions)

XI. And to live for God's glory.

- A. Biblically speaking, there is no sacred/secular distinction in our lives. Life is lived in the presence of God, for the glory of God. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Fundamentally...worship in the New Testament means believing the gospel and responding with one's whole life and being to the person and work of God's Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. (David Peterson, *Engaging With God*, pg. 286)
- B. Among other things, gathering to worship God should make us humble, secure, grateful, holy, loving, and mission-minded.
- C. If we meet with God, shouldn't it affect the way we live?