

RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE SUNDAY REHEARSAL

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I. Purpose

- A. The rehearsal serves the Sunday meeting

Our aim is to assist the gathered church as it magnifies the greatness of God in Jesus Christ through song and the preached word.

- B. The more effective the rehearsal, the more effectively the musical team and technical teams can use their gifts to serve in the Sunday meeting

1. Serving in an undistracting way
2. Serving with excellence
3. Entering the Sunday meeting with joy, faith, and peace

II. Common Problems in rehearsals

- A. Different goals for musical team and technical team

- B. Lack of leadership and planning

- C. Lack of communication

- D. Common temptations to sin

1. Anxiety – “This is never going to come together!”
2. Fear of man – “This has to be perfect, because everybody’s going to hear it!”
3. Impatience – “I need my monitor now!”
4. Selfishness – “It’s OK if I’m a little late – it won’t impact anybody else.”
5. Sloth (laziness) – “What I’m working on now is more fun. I’ll get around to that issue later.”
6. Discontentment and self-pity – “Lord, why do we have a sound system that always breaks?”

- E. Lack of focus - more interested in hanging out and having fun than rehearsing to serve the congregation

- F. Equipment problems

- G. Unskilled use of equipment
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III. Solutions to Common Problems

- A. Recognize the varying goals of the sound team and worship team
 - 1. Sound: technical, checklists, knowing what's coming next
 - 2. Worship team: music, creativity
- B. Address common temptations with biblical wisdom
 - 1. Make the team aware of the temptations
 - a. Worship team: comparing, selfishness
 - b. Sound team: sloth, "It's OK as is"
 - 2. Point to the biblical responses and their effects
 - a. Trust, rather than anxiety
 - b. Fear of God, rather than fear of man
 - c. Patience, rather than impatience
 - d. A focus on serving others, rather than selfishness
 - e. Hard work, rather than laziness
 - f. Joy and delight rather than self-pity
 - 3. Highlight where God is at work
 - 4. Seek your pastor's counsel
- C. Work hard on your communication between tech team and worship team
- D. Communicate your plan to your team members
- E. Plan ahead for your rehearsals, not just for the meeting
- F. Trust God

IV. Before the Rehearsal

- A. Musical Preparation
 - 1. Musicians
 - a. At what skill level do the musicians play?
 - b. What are reasonable expectations for this rehearsal?
 - c. How much will we collaborate on ideas, and how much will the leader direct the ideas?
 - d. Have they played this music before?
 - e. Will everyone be there?
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2. Song arrangements

- a. Song structure
- b. Tempos
- c. Rhythm section instrumentation
- d. "Solo" instruments or other instrumentation
- e. Vocal arrangements
- f. Spontaneous elements

3. The rehearsal itself

- a. How much time will we have?
- b. What are the most important things?
- c. What will be hardest things?
- d. Will I work on anything that is not specifically for this Sunday?

4. Meeting execution

- a. Are there any cues or transitions that need to be practiced, whether musical, projection, or technical?
- b. Are there any administrative items that the team needs to be aware of?

B. Technical Preparation

1. Information and Communication

- a. Collect service order and musical information from worship leader
- b. Create and distribute:
 - 1) Stage Diagram
 - 2) Input Lists
 - 3) Output Lists
 - 4) Service Order with technical notes
 - 5) Checklists for volunteer positions

2. Setup

- a. Get everything set up correctly in a peaceable way prior to the band's arrival.

Requires: time, space, expertise, and accurate info about the band

- b. Troubleshoot anything that isn't working correctly.

Requires: time for testing and systematic working through of problems at the end of setup

- c. Prepare team for what to expect in the rehearsal and in the entire service.

Requires: accurate info about the service and the band

V. Soundcheck (Separate from Rehearsal)

A. Technical Recommendations

1. Starting Soundcheck

Someone on the sound crew should start and lead soundcheck, but with the help of the worship leader.

2. Steps

- a. Set initial gains
- b. Make sure each musician can hear himself and the worship leader enough to play something.
- c. Set front-of-house levels as everyone plays
- d. Set monitor levels as everyone plays

3. If you...

- a. Run house and monitors from one board: A then B then C then D
- b. Run house and monitors from separate boards: A then B then C&D
- c. Run monitors from a personal monitor mixing system: A then B&C&D

4. "Everyone Plays"

This is the primary reason why soundcheck and rehearsal are not particularly compatible.

5. Ending Soundcheck

Someone on the sound crew should communicate with the worship leader when soundcheck is complete and rehearsal can officially begin.

B. Musical Recommendations

1. Let the technical team take the lead, if they are able
2. Don't jump into rehearsal before it's time.
3. Everyone should be clear on who is in charge, and to whom they should communicate (and how) if they need help

VI. Rehearsal

A. Musical recommendations

1. Don't go through the whole song, but practice transition moments
 - a. Start of a song
 - b. Turns
 - c. End of chorus
 - d. End of song
 - e. Transition from one song to another

2. Establish the groove
3. Give the team simple arrangement instructions (who should play when)
4. Practice what you're bad at

"If you want to be a good musician, practice what you're good at. If you want to be a great musician, practice what you're bad at."

5. Do the most important things first

B. Technical Recommendations

1. Get best possible mix in the house

Requires: the band play for at least a few minutes straight on every song

2. Get details on arrangements to mix actively

Requires: the worship leader communicate through his microphone about arrangement requests

VII. After Rehearsal, Before the Meeting

A. Technical

1. Nail down all details about arrangements

Requires: the band stops arranging at some reasonable point.

2. Nail down all details about other service elements (videos, communion, baptisms, etc.) and remaining microphones

Requires: the band to stop rehearsing with enough time to prep these elements without being a problem for the arriving congregation

3. Clean up the stage

Requires: the band to identify what can be moved and what needs to stay out there

VIII. Final Thoughts on a “Successful” Rehearsal

- A. Communication and Relationships are critical
- B. How musicians can overcome typical temptations to serve technical team.
- C. How tech team folks can overcome typical temptations to serve musicians.
- D. Reminder of the true goals of rehearsal: worship in Spirit and Truth

IX. Q&A
