Principles for effective Praise and Worship

One important ministry in today’s church is Praise and Worship. It has a unique and special calling that requires gifts and skills that are different from a musician, choir member, or lead vocalist. A leader of worship, in some form or another, taps into the prophetic by being sensitive to the atmosphere and knowing how to shift it. This is a major responsibility of a praise and worship leader. The worship leader is an individual that is called and anointed by God to minister in the house of God by leading the people of God into His presence.

Leading Praise and Worship is one of the most difficult ministries in church. As stated before the leader must be able to tap into the prophetic anointing to know the atmosphere. Every service is different with so many needs in the audience, some of which can be sick, hurting, stubborn, lazy or unteachable. This can be a very hard task especially if you are not called or anointed for ministry.

Praise and Worship should be an active, participatory, and a vital part of the service. The congregation is not to be a spectator, but should become an active participant. Never be more concerned about performance than His presence.

Scriptural Truth
John 4:21-24 ……Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is a spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Worship Defined
Old English word “worthship” to ascribe worth or value to. Worthiness of the one receiving special honor or devotion.

Praise Defined
To commend the worth of; speak well of, recommend, appreciate; To glorify, especially by crediting with perfections;

Praise vs. Worship
Praise – Dwelling upon what God has done; His acts; What He is doing, will do.
Worship – Dwelling upon Who He Is; His Deity, not just His acts

We were created to Worship
Isa 43:21     1 Peter 2:9     Rev 4:11

Expression of Praise (Hebrew)
Barak        To kneel, bless, or salute
Halal        To boast, celebrate
Shabach      Shout, address in a loud tone; triumph.
Tehillah     High praise, to sing and praise
Towdah       Sacrifice or praise (What God is going to do)
Yadah        Lifted hands; thankful expression
Zamar        Instrumental praise

Worship Resources
Body         Bowing, Kneeling, Dance, Stillness
Hands        Clapping, Lifting, Giving
Music        Instruments, New Songs, Call & Response
Voice        Sing, Shout, Praise, Boast, Prayer
Will         Confession, Self-examination, Awe

How you praise depends on how well you know the one you praise.

The three functions of the worship leader
1. To lead the entire congregation into the presence of God.
   The congregation needs to have an encounter with God in every service.
2. To coordinate, cover the praise team and musicians.
   Make sure you understand the basics of music and the ministry of the singers and musicians working with you. When you are leading Worship you are responsible for what is going on musically on the platform.
3. To prepare the congregation for the delivery of the word.
   Make sure that you are one with the leadership of the church. Understand the direction God is talking the church through the vision of the Pastor. 2 Kings 3:14-15

The Preparation of the Worship Leader
1. Sanctify yourself.
2. Wait on the Lord for direction
3. Keep an accurate, categorized list of songs
4. Practice, Practice, Practice!!

The Attitude of the Worship Leader
1. Be enthusiastic and positive. Smile!! Let your face reflect His glory and joy. If you don’t, the congregation won’t.
3. Lead by example. You set the example for active involvement (Clapping, shouting, lifting hands, etc.)
4. Be an encourager, an exhorter. Don’t preach!! Just encourage.
5. You must also worship with the congregation.

Practical points for the Worship Leader
1. Know your musicians, singers, and/or soundtracks
   a. Practice with the musicians and singers
   b. Keep hand signals easy to follow
      i. Temp changes
      ii. Modulations or new keys
      iii. Directions within a song
      iv. Volume changes
      v. Transitions between songs
   c. Have song chosen with appropriate keys before service
2. Don’t spend too much time talking
   a. Encourage the people as they worship (Don’t assume everyone understands what is going on)
   b. You can easily break the flow of worship with too much talking
   c. Don’t beat the congregation over the head. If any corrections or rebukes need to be given, this should be done by the Pastor.
3. Choose your songs carefully
   a. Attempt to develop and accomplish something in worship.
   b. Be careful with theme, tempo, and key changes (some songs can not go together!)
   c. Maintain a flow between songs. Don’t stop after every song. Learn medleys or set of song that go together (thematically and musically)
   d. Are you singing a key that is comfortable for you but not for the comfortable for the congregation?
c. Do not choose songs that have an enormous amount of words for the congregation to sing, or long solo verses. You will only lose the congregation and they will not be participating in worship.

f. Choose more songs than you need

4. Know your music
   a. Do not practice on the congregation
   b. Do not sing something you yourself are not familiar with! This will only breed confusion and make it difficult for the congregation to focus on God
   c. Be prepared!!

5. Give strong leadership
   a. You must lead.
   b. Give clear direction. People respond well when they know what is expected of them. Be what you are looking for.
   c. Stay slightly ahead of the verse or chorus of the Praise/Worship song you are singing. Stick with the melody. Sometimes it is even good on a new song, to speak out the words just before singing a particular chorus or verse. You must lead vocally.
   d. Make sure you are leading people to the Lord, and not to yourself. Lead in a way that does not draw attention to you.
   e. Open your eyes!! Make eye contact.
   f. You must worship!!!

6. Be sensitive to the flow and timing of the Holy Spirit
   a. Do not be scared to sing a chorus or verse several times
   b. Do not be scared of silence (there are different waves of worship)
   c. Know when enough is enough for a particular song!! STOP!
   d. Do not get in a hurry. Allow time for the Holy Spirit to move.
   e. You can be prepared and sensitive to the Holy Spirit. The two are no mutually exclusive.
   f. Never put God in a box. He may want to do something completely different from what you had planned. (You may only sing one song for your entire Praise and Worship time! Be open to that)
   g. Always keep an eye on the Pastor. He/She will know when certain things are in order and when they are not.
   h. Do not be scared to change the mood of things by perhaps letting the women sing a verse by themselves, or the men sing a chorus by themselves, or let the congregation sing a cappella sometimes.
   i. Do not get so “lost in the spirit” that you are not aware of what is going on around you.
Essentials of Music Ministry

The music ministry is to act as a vehicle to usher in the presence of God. It is to set and establish an atmosphere that is conducive to worship, enabling the presence of God to move freely among the congregation, and for each person in the congregation to experience Christ on a personal level. The music ministry should serve as an enhancement to the worship service (not a distraction), preparing the people for the delivery of the Word of God. It is not an end in itself, but neither is it a means of filling gaps in the worship experience. The music ministry should not be used as a piece of scenic background, but rather an active, participatory, and integral part of the worship service.

Our first and primary focus/mission in everything we do as a music ministry is to magnify and glorify Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:16-17). Furthermore, it is also the mission of the music ministry to assist/facilitate the fulfillment of the overall mission and vision of this church through the delivery of

A. Excellent enhancement of the worship service through spiritual and spirit led music.
B. Anointed music that edifies, inspires and challenges the body of Christ, and further enables them to experience Christ on a personal level.
C. Thought-provoking and intelligent music that continues to raise the level of consciousness of the awesome nature of the God we serve through praise and worship.
D. Christ centered music that boldly shares the Good News to those who are lost
E. Diverse and multifaceted music ministry, for a diverse congregation, that will not be mired in mediocrity or tradition, but continues to push the edges of the envelope, so that effective ministry can take place in any atmosphere, and at anytime
F. Innovative, fresh, and creative music that is unique to this church
G. Training that equips, empowers, and enables others to grow and realize their full potential in the area of music ministry.
Principle Music Ministry Components

Someone must be in charge – Don’t be scared of skill. Skill is practical ability and dexterity knowledge, expertness, aptitude. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skillful. (1Cor 15:22)

Minister of Music
Purpose/ Job Description/ Expectations
Qualifications
- Must have qualifications that fit musically, spiritually, administratively and that of leadership.
Selection Process
Submission Factor

Musicians
Propose/ Job Description/ Expectation
Qualifications
Selection Process/ Auditions/ Entrance Requirements
- What you need vs. What you can effectively use
Band Rotation/ Structure

Praise Leader/ Teams
Purpose/ Job Description/ Expectation
Qualifications
Selection Process/ Auditions/ Entrance Requirements
Structure
It is important to note here, that just because a person is a great singer; it does not necessarily translate to being a great worship leader.

Choir
Purpose/ Job Description/ Expectation
Qualifications
Selection Process/ Auditions/ Entrance Requirements
Structure/ Set-Up
- How many
- When do they sing/ rehearse
- Enough personnel for effective oversight

Audio/ Visual (Sound)
**Principle Music Ministry Components**

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**Minister of Music** - The minister of music is responsible to the Pastor and to the church for planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating a comprehensive music ministry.

**Musicians** - The musicians are responsible to the Minister of Music and Pastor for playing of congregational services and special services as assigned.

**Praise Leader/ Teams** - The praise team encourages each individual in the body of Christ to make “His” praise glorious by leading the congregation in a corporate time of praise and worship.

**Choir** - The choir sings music that is to exalt God, edify and prepare the congregation to receive the word of God.
Audio/Visual (Sound) - The Audio/Visual team is responsible to make sure that everything audible and visual is properly in place for worship leaders, choir, and speakers so there won’t be any distractions in worship.

Music Ministry Administration/Organization

A. Rules / Guidelines (Government Document)
B. Administrative Forms
   a. Music Ministry Applications
   b. Notifications of Change Form
   c. Audition Forms
C. Organizational Flow Chart
   a. Who Does what and who reports to who
D. Music ministry leadership team
E. Business Meetings
F. Budgets
G. Yearly Goals
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   d. Music Logs
   e. Equipment Logs
Important for an effective rehearsal

Rehearsals are designed to prepare for the worship service musically. A person accepting membership in the music department or accepting a call to the music ministry must realize that rehearsals are a must. Rehearsing provides a way to perfect the goodness in God’s music. So many times, choir members wait outside rehearsal because they don’t like the song being rehearsed; however, the song will be rendered anyway. So go in, on time, asking God to reveal the worthiness of this song to you or at least in your music ministry have the desire to want to sing the song well. So don’t hesitate in the hall until your song is rehearsed. Make yourself open to learn all the music.

There are four things to consider as a choir member in regards to rehearsal:

1. **Prepare for rehearsal** – before getting there. Pray for God to be in your rehearsal and to help you to be open and receptive to the new learning and to give you power to remember new music that was previously taught. Review any words or parts in your music that your director has asked you to learn or not to forget.

2. **Be on time** – There is only a short amount of time and so much music to cover. The director, if organized, knows how he or she will spend every moment.

3. **Things to bring**
   a. A good attitude
   b. A digital recorder is always helpful.
   c. Folder and pencil

4. **Be Attentive** – Choir members, as a part of this body (the choir), must be attentive to the choir director, the musical staff and the pastor. Each member of the music has a job to do the insure that the body is glorifying God.
Choir Member’s Beatitudes

1. Blessed are they who have limited training; for their’s is the opportunity for musical growth.
2. Blessed are they that are not satisfied with their contribution to the choir; for surely they shall take measures to improve this situation.
3. Blessed are the faithful in attendance; for they shall become the pillars of strength in their respective voice sections.
4. Blessed are they who are eager to learn their correct voice parts; for they shall be taught.
5. Blessed are they who realize the director can make mistakes occasionally, so that they not are embarrassed when errors originate from them.
6. Blessed are the dedicated choir members; for they shall receive and impart the maximum musical inspiration.
7. Blessed are the “boosters”; for they shall be called the backbone of the choir.
8. Blessed are they who can accept constructive criticism; for they shall ultimately produce divine music.
Below is a list of Music Theory Definitions to aid in concept development and executions.

**A CAPPELLA** - Without instrumental accompaniment

**CHOIR** - An organized company of singers, especially in church service.

**COVER** - Remake of a song

**CRESCENDO** - A gradual increase in volume

**CROSSOVER MUSIC** - Music that is played in a variety of formats/styles

**DECRESCEDEO** - A gradual decrease in volume.

**DYNAMICS** - Variation in intensity of musical sound.

**GENRE** - A kind; sort; type

**GOSPEL** - Good News; of or pertaining to the teaching of Jesus Christ; Contemporary living or happening in the same period of time;

**HARMONY** - The simulations comb notes in a chord.

**INVERSION** - Vocally speaking, changing or flipping the position of the vocal chord/parts (Sop., Alto, Ten), up or down within the same key.

**MODULATION** - The process of changing from one key to another within a composition.

**MUSIC** - From the Greek word; Sumphonia; the art of combining sounds or sequences of notes into harmonious patterns pleasing to the ear and satisfying to the emotions.

**MUSICIANSHIP** - Skill, insight, and artistry in the performance of music

**PRAYER POINTS**

1) Pray for a strong desire for the Presence of the Holy Spirit on every aspect of the team: Musically, technically, leadership, etc.

2) Ask for “divine enablement” for your specific area of ministry.

3) Pray for unity (Psalm 133) and that nothing would steal or diminish the anointing.

4) Believe for such a strong anointing on the coming days of worship that the bondages in people’s lives would be broken and permanently destroyed during the worship set.

5) Pray for, look for, and anticipate the gifts of the Spirit being in operation as well as a tangible increase in the anointing.

6) Pray for holiness, purity, and integrity to permeate the team! That we would live as “vessels of honor.”

7) “MORE LORD!”