

WE WORSHIP

We Worship

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WORSHIP

Worship literally means "worth-ship".

'Worship' is quite often used to refer to acts, expressions and/or a state of religious devotion typically directed to one or more deities.

One Author defines worship thus: "The adoring acknowledgment of all that lies beyond us—the glory that fills heaven and earth. It is the response that conscious beings make to their Creator, to the Eternal Reality from which they came forth; to God, however they may think of Him or recognize Him, and whether He be realized through religion, through nature, through history, through science, art, or human life and character."

We were made for Worship

From the beginning of time we have worshiped. As humans it is innate to our nature. It is a reflex. Believing in God is not a prerequisite to worship. In fact in the denial of God we worship ourselves. In the context of Religion every faith has it's traditions of worship.

Muslims pray five times a day, make yearly sacrifices and give to the poor. Many eastern religions promote meditation in an effort to discover the true 'self'. Confucianism denies the existence of any supreme God or Creator, relying fully on the intellect, making everyone their own God. Some Indian religions promote the worship of hundreds of thousands of Gods. The point is that in every belief system around the globe there are specific rituals and practices that could be defined as worship. So what makes our worship any different? What takes it from a mere ritual to something more? To something sacred! Perhaps it starts with the nature of Christianity itself. In all of the religions of the world there seems to be a life long list of prerequisites to finding "favor" with one's deity of choice. Quite simply you must DO this (plug in your rituals of worship) to GET this (favor or blessing from deity or peace and tranquility for self)! And you must keep doing this to get that! For your whole life! Even then there are no real guarantees for eternity! Now look at Christianity! For God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son that who so ever believes on Him might have everlasting life! The Work is done! He did it for us! Salvation is a result of His work for us! Not our work towards Him . Upon our belief in Christ's obedient act on the cross we are given the rights of heirs, of children with the full attention of their Father! This is what makes our worship unique! It is a celebration an expression an outpouring an overflow an acknowledgement a result of what IS! Because of what He did at the Cross. The wonder of it is that He didn't stay there at the Cross! He's alive and with every one of us! Now! Today! This very moment! If we let Him He will lead us in this and every moment of every day in a Worship that means something! With Him alive in us even the " common becomes the Divine"! Within the Body there are a myriad traditions and preferences and budgets that determine our expressions of Worship during our corporate gatherings. From million dollar productions to one guitar and a busted amp. From Orchestras and celebrity musicians to miss jones and her organ... or no instruments at all. The sound and colors of our expressions of worship within the walls of our church buildings in no way determine the authenticity of our worship! And neither should the walls of church confine our worship! Let it be that the every day becomes our " worship service". Our choices amidst the mundane, the difficult, the tragic, the joyful; our thoughts in the quiet and seclusion of our minds; our words to people we love and know, to strangers, the bum at the gas station; this is the music of our worship! We are His instruments upon which He express His glory back to Himself! This is what we were made for! To worship! And so let us do it with every created fiber of our being! Let us worship! Let us Love people where they are and for who they were made to be. His instruments! Each one a unique expression of His creativity!

THE WORSHIP TEAM

1. No role is insignificant

Every person that makes up the team of people that is responsible for leading a congregation in corp. worship should take their job seriously.

2. Not all leaders are out in front

Each member of the worship team is a worship leader. Whether that person is the one running the lyrics or the one running visuals and lighting or the one standing at the lead mic.

3. One for all and all for (the) One

The purpose of what we do as worship leaders is to join together to lead people in an authentic expression of worship. In coming together as a part of the Body our individual agendas should be left at the door. Each one of us is an instrument of worship. We stay in tune by humbling ourselves to serve each other. Beautiful music and perfect media isn't necessarily harmonious worship. God is listening to our hearts and as such even the most simple and unnoticed expressions can be a stunning display of worship to His eyes.

RELATIONSHIPS

1. People are the foundation of corporate worship

Without people in relationship corporate worship can not exist.

2. Good relationships happen on purpose

How often do we interact a certain way with those around us based on our assumptions of who they are or what they may be thinking. Time invested is the only way that authentic and trusting relationships are built.

3. Before we worship we worship.

How we act and interact in the time leading up to worship is as much an act of worship as anything we do in the corporate gathering. Our day in and day out choices are the determining factor in the authenticity of our corporate expressions of worship through our talents and responsibilities.

COMMUNICATION

1. We don't work with mind readers

Talking and communicating are not necessarily the same thing. It's easy to have expectations of those we are working with without giving them a clear understanding of what we are wanting them to accomplish. Take time to clearly define your expectations for each member of the team.

2. Learn to let go

Don't be overly possessive of the creative vision you have for your church. Most of us are part of a worship TEAM. As such we should welcome and applaud creative input from the other members of that team even if we are the ones that are ultimately responsible for what happens during each service. A unified collective effort will most often yield a richer, more creative end result!

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3. Wrong and different aren't the same

It's so easy to assume that just because someone has a different way of approaching something that it is a wrong way of approaching it! This simply isn't true. We are all influenced and inspired by different experiences, different upbringings and different personalities. We are all products of God's creativity. Those differences should be celebrated!

TECHNOLOGY SHOULD NEVER REPLACE FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION

It seems like the more ways we invent to get in touch with each other the less we actually communicate. Now days it's possible to facilitate entire relationships with people without ever actually setting foot in the same room with them. In churches these days we have on line servers that allow the lead worshiper to upload songs and charts and instructions to the team. Everybody practices it at home, there's one rehearsal before the service and that's that. It's so easy to take people out of the mix for the sake of expedience.

CHANGE IS MESSY

1. obstacle or opportunity

Invariably there will be some kind of tension as we introduce new and creative ideas to our leadership and congregation. This tension can either impede our progress or propel it forward depending on how we deal with it. Seek out those who are resisting the change and get to know them. Find out where they are coming from and ask them for their thoughts on the creative effort in you church. See this tension as something healthy and an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships.

2. Drops in a bucket

As creative people we often have the temptation of wanting to dump our entire bucket of inspiration on our church all at once! This can be a very scary and off putting thing for people that aren't necessarily as bold or creative in their expressions of worship.

3. Capture and release

Make sure to have a clear since of the whole plan for your church and then slowly implement it over the next several months. Every few weeks introduce a new element of your over all plan. Be subtle but persistent.

One thing you may find is that as you slowly implement your plan you will discover that certain aspects of your original design aren't going to actually work in real life. This cautious approach will allow you to discover these things in a way that won't spell disaster and require a major back peddle!

KNOW YOUR DEMOGRAPHIC

The number one step in planning the creative expression of worship in our church is to get to know the demographic of our congregation. Who is worshiping as a part of your congregation on a weekly basis. What is their age group? How are they already expressing themselves? This takes an investment of time and energy! Know your demographic!

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CREATIVITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Just because you can doesn't mean you should

As creative people we are often consumed with this overwhelming desire to shock people! We tend to be a bit more liberal in our expression of , well, just about anything! This can easily bleed over into our the church setting! Be wise in the delivery of your creative vision.

RELEVANCE

There is a great debate in the church today over what it means to be relevant. Often it seems that the church concludes that what is relevant is a behavior that by and large mirrors the world and then simple sprinkling a few Jesus words on top. This isn't relevance it's plagiarism. Relevance is the ability to connect with people on a heart level. As the church we are commissioned to go out into the world and make disciples. We do this by living lives of worship every day. Our normal interaction with people every day in the work place and in our social circles is what is going to make church attractive to them. Not our music and our lights.