



Leading Worship

- A few things to consider...

First and foremost if we are going to lead worship we need to be worshippers. How can we lead people somewhere we haven't been ourselves? Develop your relationship with God above everything else, Operate out of encounter - do everything out of spending time with God

To lead God's people in worship is an awesome privilege and a great responsibility...
Never forget this.

Communication

- When you are asked to lead worship, communicate with the leader and speaker before hand to get practical things sorted like what's the theme, how many songs do you want / how many sets...etc... but also to find out what they think God might want to say to the church (its good to ask the speaker to send you a few bullet points of that they will be saying) When you have got this information you can now start to look at how you can choose songs that will help people respond in worship.

Service Structure

- A lot of service structures have a Pre-service song, 2 main music slots one at the beginning and one after the talk and an offertory song (somewhere in the middle!) For Roots we tend to have just the 2 main slots.
- Use the first slot as a "call to worship" Big songs that focus on God, His character, His Power, His Love, His Greatness, His Faithfulness, songs that are all about Him and not us. This is a great way to start our worship journey because sometimes we don't "feel" great so using songs that are all about God and not about "how we feel" can really encourage people to worship. Also try and use songs that are inclusive songs with "we" in rather than "I" its important to remember we come together has one unit, a family to worship God together.
- Use the second slot to help people respond to the talk, if the talk is about surrendering, choose songs that give people opportunity to "surrender" lead them to a place of intimacy with God, songs that allow them to rest in His presence.
(Its good to note that sometimes service leaders choose to have a "final song" to wrap it the service up this is usually upbeat to "send people out".)

Choosing songs

- Pray! Before you start putting songs together ask God to guide and lead you by His spirit. Jot down some song names that come to mind that go with the theme or back up the speakers talk. First work on the "Call to worship slot" How can you start people off on their worship journey by helping them take their eyes "off" themselves and fix them on our awesome God?
- Check what songs were done in the last two services, as you don't want to do all the same songs!!

- Think about what song/s is God really blessing at the moment? What is he wanting to say to His church?
- Choose wisely depending on who you are leading, for example if you have elder members make sure there is a hymn/s in there again lets be inclusive not exclusive
- A good question to ask is if someone came to the service and only listened to the songs what would they learn about God? Don't just do 4 songs that say exactly the same thing..help people journey.
- It can be helpful to get a musical flow (but you don't always have to do it) so one song can flow into another without a "stop/start" disruptive affect, this can be particularly helpful in the second "response slot."
- Be mindful of song keys, are they too high for females or too low for males? Most songs in the soul survivor books (especially upbeat praise songs) are written in what I call "festival" keys where there are 10,000 people as you can imagine its a different dynamic with 100! I usually take the songs down one or two tones (key of B or Bb down to A and from A to G)
- Once you have worked on choosing some songs, start to worship God with them and you will see if and how they will work together, be asking God is there a certain song or lyric that He wants you to emphasize. Be thinking of beginnings and endings or how they will flow into each other so when you come to practice you have an idea of what you want as if you leave it to everyone on everyone you will never get anything done!
- Be praying and using those songs during the week as part of your times of private worship to God.

New Songs

- Its good to freshen up your song repertoire with new songs - the bible speaks about "singing a new song to the Lord" but carefully plan how your going to introduce the new songs. A good way to introduce new songs to a congregation is to use them in the Pre-service and / or offertory song slot. (maybe pre service on week, then preservice and offertory week after) After 2/3 weeks of the congregation hearing them try using it as part of the main service for 2 or 3 weeks in a row, see how the congregation are picking it up, is it helping people worship? Give it 2 weeks rest then try it for another 2 weeks in a row then make a decision whether you are going to put it in the song list or leave it.

Practices

- If possible let your team know the songs before the practice so they can be thinking and going through them. This will give you a head start in the practice.
- If you are doing a new song, send them a link to the mp3 and sheet music so again they can have an idea what to expect, this will save practice time.
- If you can get the sheet music out for the team before the practice or develop a system where each member has a file and they are individually responsible for their own music. (this can be hard work though if people forget to bring their files)
- Make sure you build a routine of praying together, this is essential if if we want to be authentic in our worship otherwise we are basically saying "God we don't need you" Pray for the congregation, pray for the speaker and leader, Pray for the band that God would lead the team for His glory.
- See, what can be the mundane task of setting up equipment,as part of your worship to God

- Try and keep the musicians under control when sound checking - as musicians cant seem to not play when their instrument is in their hand! Follow the PA persons instructions.
- Make sure everyone tunes there instruments (those applicable) at the start
- Take a strong lead, (but don't be bossy!) you will have an idea of what you want to do because of the prep you have done, communicate what you are thinking with the band and work on that as a template.
- Develop "signals" so your team can know when you want to go to a chorus / verse / stop / be quiet etc.... this can be great fun!
- Practice time can be taken up with a lot of practical musical things, thats ok, the practical element is part of your worship to God. Psalm 33v3 urges us to play "skillfully." We have our duty to do our best and care about what we do.
- Don't get too caught up with every detail like we will do a verse then chorus then verse 2 then chorus then tag then chorus x 2 because we need to be following what God is doing so people might really be responding to a chorus so you might want to repeat that a few times...etc....
- HAVE FUN! Enjoy doing what you do, try and some crazy things and be creative.
- Why not bring some food along and hang out together before hand, this is a great way to build team.
- Urge your team to keep praying and pressing into God, we want to be able to stand up and lead with integrity.

Leading Worship

- Make sure you wear appropriate clothing, nothing unhelpful like low cut tops, short skirts, football shirts, short shorts or things with massive logo's. We want Jesus to be the focus not us.
- Always turn up early so you can be there to greet your team and get things ready, plus it gives you time to pray and go over any last minute things.
- Pray with your team before leading, hand it all over to God.
- Be yourself, don't pretend to be something your not or put on a "fake" voice or accent, trust that God has called you for being YOU.
- Simply worship God! Lead with your eyes OPEN, look around see what God is doing this will help how you lead the songs,
- Keep eye contact with service leader they are the overall leader and may want to get your attention to stop or play quietly while they give direction.
- Be continually asking God "what do you want to do next?" when your leading and trust what you are thinking to do next is from God and go for it.
- If you make a mistake don't worry just keep going, or if there is a horrendous key clash where people are all playing the wrong thing. Just stop everyone and simply start again in the right key without any fuss, again we want the focus to be on God not us!
- Once you have finished leading make sure you pray together, after leading and exposing your heart and soul in worship you can be left "vulnerable" pray for Gods protection and refreshing over you all.
- Just keep having a go at leading, the more you lead the more you can learn.
- Are there other people you see who you feel God has anointed to lead worship? speak to them and pray with them about it, maybe invite them to co-lead with you at the practices, just start them off leading all the songs with you then gradually hand over a song to for them to lead alone then more and more until they are ready to give it a go in the service.

Development

- It's good for you and your team to be accountable to other people. We all have things we need to work through and it's essential to have someone who prays for us and helps us to keep moving forward in our journey
- Get reading books on worship, it gives us so much depth when we know why we do what we do! Also we can then make sure that what we are shaping our music ministry on is biblical and just the latest "sound"
- Learn from people who have been leading for years, spend time with them, watch how they lead and ask for guidance.
- Work hard to learn the songs "off by heart" so you can concentrate on leading and not what the next chord or line is.
- If you play an instrument, work hard at being the best you can, again so you can concentrate on leading rather than worrying about hitting those next chords.
- Above all like I said at the start....Develop your own personal relationship with God.

Homework....

Scenario 1:

You have been asked to lead at roots next Sunday, the theme is “surrender”
Here is the service sheet you have been given...

Roots Framework

10. 15: CD's on as people arrive / Drinks on the table

10. 30: Welcome

10.35: Roots news

10. 40: Band 2/3 songs

10. 55: Video Clip

11.00: Talk / Prayer

11.30: Band 3/4 songs

11.45: Notices and send off.

11.50: CD back on.

What will you choose and why...? (how did you arrive at choosing the songs, how are you going to link them or move from one to another?)

Scenario 2:

You have been asked to lead at roots next Sunday, the theme is “communion” and we will be taking communion together, here is the framework

Roots Framework

10. 15: CD's on as people arrive / Drinks on the table

10. 30: Welcome

10.35: Roots news

10. 40: Band: 2/3 songs

10. 55: Talk

11.15: Communion - Band: 2 songs while communion is taken (reflection)

11.30: Band: Lead 2 songs for the congregation to join in with after communion.

11.45: Notices and send off.

11.50: CD back on.

What will you choose and why...? (how did you arrive at choosing the songs, how are you going to link them or move from one to another?)

Enjoy!!

Chris Sayburn.