

COMMUNITY-BASED WORSHIP

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The Church Systems

The eight systems of every church are interconnected. While some may be more developed than others, none of these systems can stand alone. And since a church is a living entity, like us, the well-developed systems run whether we are thinking about them are not.

“But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.” 1 Corinthians 14:40

“Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past; but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism.” Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, September 30, 1902

- 1. Worship:** How we plan, execute and evaluate the weekend service at our church.
- 2. Evangelism:** How we attract people to our church.
- 3. Assimilation:** How we move people from first time guests to members at our church.
- 4. Small Groups:** How we fill and reproduce small groups at our church.
- 5. Ministry:** How we mobilize people for significant ministry at our church.
- 6. Stewardship:** How we develop extravagant givers at our church.
- 7. Leadership:** How to equip and train leaders and volunteers in our church.
- 8. Strategy:** How to equip and train leaders and volunteers in our church.

Introduction: What Is Worship?

The dictionary defines worship as “to adore, to express devotion, to be full of admiration.” When we come together to worship, we should be seeking an opportunity for a passionate, intense focus of our heart on God. We come seeking specific opportunities to express our adoration and love for God. We can hear a great sermon and beautiful special music, plus enjoy seeing and visiting with our friends—and yet completely fail to worship. Worship removes awareness of ourselves or others and places a vision of God alone in our hearts and minds. True worship is all about God—focusing our heart on Him—adoring Him, loving Him, praising Him.

“Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in holy array.” Psalm 29:1-2

“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.’ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.’ And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen.’ And the elders fell down and worshiped.” Revelation 5:11-14

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” Revelation 4:11

Who is Worship For?

1. God:

A mystery of worship is that it isn't about us, but about God. But, God doesn't need our worship; we do. God isn't some insecure cosmic being, who waits for His worshippers to remind Him how awesome He is and how desperately they need Him before He decides to intervene. God never changes. But when we worship, we change.

"Worship God!" (Revelation 19:10; 22:9).

2. Ourselves:

In Romans 12:1-2, Paul connects the "spiritual act of worship" with transformation and the renewing of our minds. And in 2 Corinthians 3:18 he teaches us that when we behold or contemplate God's glory, we are "transformed into his likeness." Worship is participatory. If we allow it, worship can transform us. Worship awakens a desire to change by challenging our spiritual status quo. Worship challenges us to take an honest look within.

3. Community:

As we are attempting to reach a people in a specific community, we want that worship experience to be something relevant to the people in that community.

Preparing for a New Worship Experience

1. Setting Opening Day Expectations

Vision is all about painting a picture of a preferable future and then moving deliberately forward in pursuit of the vision. The preliminary launch plan starts with this end in mind: "We believe God's vision for this church plant is to look like [fill in the blank] on opening day." From this vision of what opening day looks like, the launch plan is customized with church specific actions.

2. Prepare for Engaging Worship

Types of Worship Service

1. Christian-Driven:

This mindset is that the worship service is for the believer only. Because someone does not know Christ, they cannot worship Him. Therefore, we do not plan any part of the service for those who lack the ability to truly worship.

2. Seeker-Driven:

The entire worship experience is designed for the unbeliever- not for those who know Christ. As such, the worship experience rarely ever "goes deep." Churches that are able to effectively embrace this model create another service in the week that is designed for the believer.

3. Seeker-Sensitive:

Because genuine worship can have such a profound impact on unbelievers, we need to be very mindful of their fears, hang-ups, and needs when they are present in our worship services.

4. Seeker-Comprehensible

This is a recognition that non-believers are present in worship and we want them to be able to comprehend what is happening, allowing them the same opportunity to engage in worship. This is the principle Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 14:23: Paul commanded that tongues be limited in public worship.

Through the things you do and say, you also communicate in subtle ways who is 'in' and who is 'out'. If you provide no explanation or context for the things that are done during the worship gathering, unchurched people will be confused at best or made to feel unwelcome at worst.

In the same way, the little hints dropped from the platform can be confusing or un-inclusive:

- *"You remember the story of Jesus and the 10 lepers..." - the unchurched and dechurched probably don't*
- *"You know how when you're praying..." - someone who's never prayed can't relate to this*
- *"First Thessalonians 3:12 says..." - Biblical literacy is very low and some won't know that this is a scripture reference, or even that scripture is broken down into books, chapters and verses*

3. Develop Framework for Worship

Decide what will go into the typical order of service so that there's a common understanding and expectation for your teams. There will be lots of people involved in planning and executing the weekly worship gatherings. Having a standard framework allows more people to be included in the process.

You don't want to get locked into doing the same old thing every week, but you also don't want all of your teams left guessing from week to week what they'll have to do. Creating a typical order of service or framework allows you to train your teams, gain efficiencies, and deviate for an intentional purpose.

Common elements of a worship gathering include:

- Welcome
- Message/Sermon
- Worship Songs
- Announcements
- Communion
- Offering
- Special Element (video or song)
- Liturgical Element (responsive reading or scripture reading)
- Prayer

But don't feel locked into only doing these things or having to do all of them every week.

Communicating Worship Elements

Will or How will you share the worship service? What details will it contain?

- Print Form
- Digital (downloaded, YouVersion)
- Both

4. Prepare for Preaching & Teaching

“By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.... For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Psalm 33:6,9

“Lord... just say the word, and my servant will be healed.” Matthew 8:8

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17

5. Select the Facility

Finding the right facility is one of the biggest challenges we'll face as a multi-site. Choosing to have church in a rented space, rather than build a permanent building, allows churches to engage with the community in a recognizable building and begin church in a space that can be leveraged differently as growth occurs.

We want our facility to be recognizable, navigable, relevant and affordable. We know that environment and attendee experience matters and we want the site to capture our church's DNA and personality. We believe it is worth waiting for the right facility that will flex with us as we grow, rather than a venue that could cap or limit our growth.

6. Decide on the Worship Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the worship gathering will have a huge impact on how the unchurched feel about the new church, and even how they feel about God. And it plays into how easy or difficult it is for everyone there to connect with God.

The Physical Environment

Each of these communicate in subtle ways whether you've expected guests or not, and whether you expect people to experience God that day or not:

- Facility layout - space for people to hang out & chat, how chairs are arranged, how the stage is set up
- Outdoor and interior signage - information and context cues for guests
- Aesthetics - banners, drapes, backdrops, colors, etc.
- Lighting
- Aroma - nightclubs and school gymnasiums may need a little work
- Bathrooms - cleanliness, location, comfort

Style of Music

For both background music and the worship songs, does the music style reflect local culture and preference, or does it reflect a churchy preference?

Mood and Tone

Through the things you do and say, the atmosphere of the service can be:

- Fun and humorous
- Serious and thoughtful
- Happy and celebratory
- Warm and emotive
- etc...

7. Obtain Start Up Equipment

Once the location is found, we will begin obtaining the necessary equipment for ministry to function. The primary areas will include:

- ◇ Worship and AVL Needs
- ◇ Hospitality and Greeter Ministries
- ◇ Children's Ministry and Sabbath School
- ◇ Environment and Aesthetics

8. Establish Set-Up Procedures and Team Structures

Once we have a facility and our equipment, we begin developing and learning our efficient Set-Up & Tear-Down team structures. It takes an equipped team to successfully set up and tear down the Audio / Video / Lighting (AVL), Chairs, Signage, Coffee and Refreshments, Welcome Area, Backdrops, Class Rooms and Youth Area and more.

It should take about six weeks to hit our stride as a volunteer team. During this time, we'll want to train two separate teams so that we can alternate teams as we move forward, giving each team a week off between volunteer obligations.