

IGNITION PRAISE TEAM:

THE HANDBOOK

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VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Purpose of a Praise Band

God is the goal of a praise band. The primary purpose of any praise band is to give glory to our Lord, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Master of the Universe who is to be the whole purpose of our lives. He is worthy of all of our worship, and the responsibility lies with the praise band to lead God's people into an encounter of worship with Him. This should not be a responsibility to be handled lightly, nor with mediocrity. We want to bring God the best we have.

In the context of a praise band, our best would include all of the talents and skills He has blessed us with, time devoted to rehearsals, practicing at home, and leading worship services with a genuine heart to glorify God. This handbook seeks to teach a praise band how to bring its best to God in worship. We will go through worship philosophy, styles, flow, the different instruments that can be used in a praise band, rehearsals and performances. Hopefully, with the help of this handbook, your praise band can sharpen its musical skills and its focus on the true heart of worship.

Our motto? "First, cause no distraction."

Worship Philosophy

Music is an essential part of worship. Psalm 81:1-4 says, "Sing praises to God, our strength. Sing to the God of Jacob. Sing! Beat the tambourine. Play the sweet lyre and the harp. Blow the ram's horn at new moon, and again at full moon to call a festival! For this is required by the decrees of Israel; it is a regulation of the God of Jacob" (NLT). Music is something that is not only encouraged for worship in the Bible, but it is commanded. It is a very valuable tool for leading people into worship.

But worship music should never be thought of as the entirety of worship itself. Worship is to be an expression of love and praise toward God that comes out from our entire lives, not just our songs. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Romans 12:1 NIV). We are to live our lives for the glory of God—this is true worship. I once heard someone say that "everything we do is either an act of worship or an act of idolatry." I love that saying, because I believe it is very true. I think many people tend to view music as the only form of worship we offer to God. We sing songs and worship God, and then we go home and live our lives like normal. But this is not what God has commanded us to do. Everything we do can be worship. If I wash the dishes or walk the dog to the glory of God, that is worship.

But our purpose as a praise band in the whole wide spectrum of worship is to glorify God through music. So that is what we will be focusing on here. Our worship offered as a praise band need not be just during worship services. The very acts of submitting our talents to God, serving others in worship, and practicing at home are worship.

One thing that honors God within a praise band is submitting the talents He has given you to Him, to the band, and to the listeners. In a praise band, we are not called to be rock stars, but to humbly submit ourselves. Sometimes this is hard on the ego, especially of musicians. Many times I've found myself up on stage, leading people in worship, and all I'm thinking about is how people are looking at me. I'll think to myself that they're all thinking, "Man, he's got a good voice," or "He's really passionate about worship, he must be a really great Christian." This is not submitting to God. In those cases, I was seeking to glorify myself instead of Him. When we do this, it is cheating

God, the audience, and ourselves.

Another act of submission we can do to honor God is to submit ourselves to the overall sound of the band. A lot of times if we get excited, we'll want to play all the time, be loud, and be heard by the audience. But playing like that can ruin the overall sound of the band, and the music that leads people into worship won't be of good quality. We have to realize that balance is what makes a good sound, and many times, less is more. The simpler we keep the sound, the better. Sometimes the best thing for us to do as musicians during a song is to not play during a certain section. As an individual, you are one part of a group whose goal is to worship God. We all need to find out how we can work together as a team to create the best possible sound for our worship. It is never about one person.

As a band, our worship needs to be an expression of our own hearts as well. If we are not really worshipping God through our music, but just singing the words and playing the notes, it will show through to the audience. If we are genuine, and our hearts are really focused on God, it will be evident to the audience, and it can inspire them in their own worship. But also, we need to make sure we are worshipping God for the pure reason that He deserves it. Make room in your music for your own time of personal worship. But we also need to make sure that we don't get too lost in our worship that we forget what we're doing and mess up the song, which could hinder the worship of the audience. We need to find a good balance of staying grounded and alert of what we're doing while offering up our own personal worship of God at the same time.

Styles of Worship

I believe that God doesn't really care what kind of style we use in our music as long as we are humbly praising Him. We should explore every biblical option we have to express worship and praise to God. If we don't have any variety in our sound as a praise band, the audience could get bored and this can negatively affect their worship. So let's try to mix it up a little bit. There are many styles of music out there that can be used in the context of worship like traditional, rock, country, funk, Celtic, even R&B. Experiment with different styles to use in worship, and by all means, let worship be fun! Worship is also to be a celebration, an expression of our praise. Celebration and praise should not be quiet and boring. Add an upbeat rock song, or a funky groove here and there. Let your musical talents shine through in worship; don't just settle for whatever is easiest or most acceptable.

But one important thing to remember is that, when you experiment with different styles, we need to make sure the style fits the lyrical content and the overall mood of the song. If a song is a more contemplative, intimate worship song, you probably shouldn't play it with a rock feel. If it is a celebratory song, rock on! But just be aware of the lyrical content and try to mesh the mood of the lyrics with the style of the music.

Flow

A big part about leading worship is creating flow. This is the process where we illustrate musically a journey for worshippers to enter into the gates of God's throne room. It is accomplished by creating a musical set with minimal distractions or interruptions. By eliminating distractions and most interruptions, we keep the focus on God and off the other things that might distract us and the audience.

Two things that can be distracting in a worship setting are lighting and power point. Make sure that the lighting is set up so that it will reflect and help the mood of the worship atmosphere, and look out for any lighting that looks out of place or stands out too much. Errors on power point can be a big distraction. Let's say I am in the congregation at a worship service, singing the song "O Praise Him," and the words come up on the screen as "The sound of angles' songs...." The spelling error on "angels" throws me off, and I giggle and instantly start reminiscing about the good old days of geometry back in high school. I've lost that focus on God that the song is intended for. So always, always, always double check your power point for any spelling or grammatical errors. Also, don't make power point too flashy, where it gets to the point where it's hard to read the words. Simple is best.

Musically, it will take effort to keep the flow going in your set. One of the best ways to do this is to carefully plan out your set with the order of songs and be aware of what keys the songs are in. It is always a great effect when you have a nice transition from song to song where you can keep playing in the same key. Sometimes, if songs are in keys that are about a ½ step or a full step apart, you can help the transition in the current song by modulating up to the key of the next song. Try to be creative in this; set songs next to each other in the set that are similar in mood and style, and if they are in the same key, you can create a nice medley. Just as an example, have your keyboard player lay down a soft pad with some acoustic guitar picking over it between the songs. Let it be a contemplative time for the people. This way, there are no interruptions in the people's worship, and it helps people to keep that connection to God strong.

Group Dynamics

Working with a band can be tough, especially if you have clashing personalities within the group. As with any group, being in a praise band take patience, understanding, and most of all, humility. There have been situations I have seen where pride causes some big problems within a band. Sometimes I think God can put us in group situations, like a band, in order to be a check on our pride. In a group situation, we come across ideas

different from our own, and we can learn to see the situations from the perspective of another. We may come to realize that we are not always right.

The fact is, in a praise band, each member needs to serve one another. If there is one person who is looked upon as a leader, he/she should be the first ones serving the other members. When we are serving, we are loving and building unity within the group. “Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace” (Ephesians 4:3 NLT). There needs to be mutual respect and love among the members. There should be no member who is spotlighted above the rest, but we should all have the attitude that everyone has their place, and no one else could fill it like they could.

A fantastic way to build unity in a band is to set aside time after practicing to just worship together. This will not only help your band to build unity, but to really cultivate what the heart of worship is for when you are leading worship. When we minister to a large group of people in a worship setting, our worship will be an overflow of what we are doing privately. So as a group, worship God together. Hold group Bible studies and have deep discussions. Grow together spiritually, and it will show through in your ministry.

Talking

The rehearsal is generally not the time to commit to an ongoing discussion with the person standing next to you (or worse yet, across the stage from you). If you have questions or need to work out a part, please address those questions to the leader. Individual conversations are very distracting when the leader is trying to give direction to the whole team. Work out the parts as a team.

Over-Playing

See above on Talking. Don't continue playing while the worship leader is giving direction. If you need to work out a part, work it out together as a team.

Practice Makes Perfect

The old saying “practice makes perfect” is not accurate. While practice does not make perfect, it does make permanent. If something is practiced incorrectly, it will be performed incorrectly. Again, this is an issue of focus. Make plenty of legible notes on the provided charts, use those notes as you rehearse and watch your perfect practice make permanent.

Monitors

Listening to each other is crucial. Hearing everyone, not just your instrument or vocal is very important. The goal is to play together as a team, not to play at the same time as individuals. There is a big difference. Make sure you can hear what everyone is doing. Make sure you get what you need in the monitor mix, but do so with love and grace realizing that

unless the soundman leaves the mixer and comes up on stage he can't really hear what you are hearing. Patience is a great attribute to have here.

The preferred method of operation is that you communicate your monitor needs with the leader and the leader will communicate with the soundman. Again, work this out as a team and not individually. Sometimes what you hope to accomplish individually is actually counterproductive to the team. Please be encouraging with your comments. Most sound techs want to help you and support you, but cannot if you aren't able to tell them what you are hearing/feeling from the monitors. Sometimes it is difficult to describe what you are hearing/feeling. Other than volume up and down, a couple of things to be able to communicate are muffled or dark tones; and bright/tinny or lack of fullness.

Eye contact

Some songs will be played the same way every single time. Other songs lend themselves to much more freedom. Good communication is imperative. Eye contact, body language and movement, hand signals, etc are the best ways to communicate during a song. Please watch and listen to the leader especially toward the ends of sections where a good leader will give direction.

Worship Leaders

Everyone on the worship team should consider themselves worship leaders, as the congregation is looking to them for direction. They can be guided into the throne room or distracted into the parking lot. You should be prepared by being prompt and warmed-up, and you should be modest in your attire and actions. Make sure to keep the focus on Christ.

Hard Work

People watch an excellent worship team and think, "I can do that. It doesn't look so hard." They have no idea. Others think that good worship teams never practice but simply "flow with the Spirit." The truth is, it's easier to respond to the Spirit's direction if the team is prepared musically. It's distracting when the team doesn't know the chords or words to a song. If all you ever did was "flow" in worship, there would be so many musical paths being taken that the team would detract from the corporate ability to worship from the heart.

For rehearsals to be productive, team members must show up on time and be ready to work, quick to receive instruction, experiment with new ideas, and rework the arrangements until they're ready. Many times this involves multiple repetitions of small sections of each song until everyone is together.

Make no mistake about it, good rehearsals are hard work. It requires intense focus and a spirit of cooperation. Everyone has to push through when things aren't coming together. There's the need for required patience when one team member needs extra attention to get their part and everyone else has to review the section several times for their sake. This is all part of being a team.

These expectations or guidelines are meant to give you freedom. As our purpose is established and communicated again and again, and we understand the boundaries and guidelines, there is tremendous freedom and trust, and grace and acceptance and creativity that allows the team to function together as a ministry team to achieve the Father's calling – transformed lives by leading people to live lives of worship.

Your Ministry

Remember that your band is a ministry, and you are there to serve the listeners, to minister to them. It is the task of the praise band to make it easy for them to get into a mode of worship. A crucial aspect of leading worship through music is that it is an act of service. We are serving those that we are leading, giving them an outlet for their worship through the songs that we sing.

One way we can do this is to make sure the songs in our set are easy for the congregation to sing. Most people would say that a comfortable congregational singing range spans from Bb to D. Try to keep your songs somewhere around that range.

Another way to sharpen your ministry is to meet with the pastor of your church, or whoever is giving the message for that day, and talk to them about the content of their message. That way you can coordinate your set list with the theme of the message, and maybe singing it will help the message sink in more. This creates an overall theme for the entire worship service, and the congregation can get a more complete experience of worship through this.

The Band

There can be many various setups for a praise band, but to get a great, basic sound, the recommended instruments are acoustic guitar, keyboard, electric guitar, bass, and drums. Sometimes, if you have the resources available to you, brass or string instruments can add really nice sound to your worship. In a band, there is a rhythm core, which gives the basic feel of the song, and the "color" instruments, which add the spice to the song, giving them their "color." The rhythm core is the drum set, bass, and acoustic guitar. The color instruments would be the piano/keyboard (but this can also be a primary instrument), electric guitar, and percussion (which is optional).

Songs can be either guitar-driven or piano-driven. To determine this, analyze the mood of the song and the style you want for it to figure out what you want to be the primary instrument. And now we will move on to the individual instruments....

Acoustic Guitar

Acoustic guitar is usually one of the primary instruments to have in a praise band. It is normally the first instrument most people think of when thinking about leading worship music. It provides rhythm with its strumming and its metal strings add a great sound to a band. It can also be used for color, but that is not very common. A soft finger

picking on acoustic guitar can have a nice affect for a slow, contemplative part of a worship service. We will go through some of the basics of acoustic guitar here.

The acoustic guitar has 6 strings, and the standard tuning is E-A-D-G-B-E. Tuning the guitar well is very important for getting a good quality sound. Once you get into the more advanced stages of guitar, you can experiment with other tunings, but for most worship settings, the standard tuning is sufficient.

There are two types of chords on guitar: open chords and barre chords. Open chords are the more basic chords you will need for worship, and they have a nice, full sound to them. An open chord is a group of notes played on the guitar that include open strings, meaning that some strings are played with no fingers pressing on their frets. One of the nice thing about open chords is that you can keep common tones while switching chords to keep a consistently full sound. Common tones are when two chords share some of the same notes such as C (C-E-G) and Am7 (A-C-E-G). When you play in the key of E (which has been called the “ultimate guitar key” for its easily structured movements), you can keep the same finger position with your left hand while moving up the fret to get different chords and keep the common tones.

Barre chords are the other type of chord for guitar. These are chords that take a little more effort, but once you get the concept, you can play any chord easily. To play a barre chord, use your first finger to barre all the way across the width of the fret board, and make the shape required for what chord you want with the other fingers. The barre chords are based on the 6th and 5th string roots. For example, to play an F barre chord, you would find that F is located on the first fret of the 6th string, and then you would barre all 6 strings on the first fret and form the proper shape with your other fingers to create the F chord. To play a Bb, you would find that Bb is located on the first fret of the 5th string, and then barre only those five strings, muting the 6th, and make the proper shape with the other fingers. There are different shapes for 5th and 6th string root chords. You just have to learn what they are and memorize them to be able to master the barre chord.

A handy tool for worship that can be used by an acoustic guitar player is the capo. The capo is a device that you attach to the neck of the guitar to raise the notes. For every fret higher you go, the notes go up by a half step. This way you can easily change keys while keeping the same chord positions with your left hand. For example, say I find a song I want to play, but it’s in Ab, a really nasty key for guitar players. I could just put a capo on the first fret and play the chords in the key of G. A capo is a guitar player’s friend. Non-guitar players will try to tell you that using a capo is like cheating, because you’re not bothering to learn the harder keys to play in. But by using a capo, you can retain that bright, full sound that you can get from playing open chords while playing in any key. It’s a really nice tool to use.

Finger picking on acoustic can be a great contribution to the sound of the band on some songs. If you switch between finger picking and strumming on a song, try tucking the pick in between your 1st and 2nd fingers while picking. It helps to keep a consistent

form with your right hand when it is picking. Assign each finger to a string and stick with that. Use your thumb for the bass string, and the other 4 fingers to the higher strings.

A cool sound effect to use on heavier, rock-oriented songs is damping. You can damp with either the right or left hand. For the right hand, lay that hand lightly on the lower strings to choke the sound when you are strumming. For the left hand, lift your hand slightly off the neck to mute the strings. A nice-sounding approach would be to damp on the verses or the intro and then back to regular strumming on the chorus for a full sound.

Keyboards

When you are playing keyboards in a worship setting, you'll want to be aware of what ranges the acoustic guitar and the bass are playing in and avoid those, because doubling up on the pitches is unnecessary and can sound cluttered. Add some flavor to the song by finding different voicings for the chords. This way you not only avoid playing the same pitches as guitar or bass, you put variety in your own playing and make it a little more exciting.

In the contemporary style, restraint and simplicity on keyboards is more appreciated than busyness. Don't try to play full out all the time, but listen and fill in where the keyboard will work the best for the overall sound. And don't be afraid of some dissonance in your playing. Dissonance can add a neat sound to a section of a song.

One thing recommended for any piano player in worship is to get jazz training. Most contemporary worship music will just be laid out on chord sheets. If you know jazz techniques, it will help you build off those chords and get a more creative sound than just playing the basic chords all the time.

Something that can be very useful from the keyboards is to provide vamps and pads during quiet reflection times or on the intros to songs. Vamps are basically repeating the chord progression to fill time in between verses or when praying. A pad would be using long, sustained notes with little movements. Usually another instrument can play over a pad to create a nice sound.

Electric Guitar

The electric guitar is a great addition to any praise band. It is a very unique instrument that can create lots of cool sounds and effects that can add a lot to the overall sound of a band.

The tendency of electric guitar players in this day and age is to want to be a rock star. But this is not what a praise band needs. It's about being a servant, not a celebrity. As with any of the instruments, when you are playing in a worship setting, be sensitive to what's going on in the song and in the service. It's okay not to play sometimes. Get to know the style of the songs and what they need from the electric guitar. Learn to listen.

This is absolutely crucial. Listen to the rest of the band, find a balance, and work to give the best of the whole band as an offering to God.

The great thing about electric guitar is that the players have so much room to be creative. There are so many sounds and styles you can work with on the electric guitar. Experiment with different tones. You can use clean tones, crunch tones, or lead tones. Using a variety of tones can create different dynamics and energy in a song. But again, just be aware of what the song needs.

Power chords on electric guitar can give a lot of energy and can elicit a lot of emotion in a song. A power chord is the root, the fifth, and the octave of a chord. The addition of power chords can be very powerful in a song.

One of the main aspects of the electric guitar that appeals to any guitarist is those crazy awesome solos. There can be room for solos in some songs in worship, but in order to become a good soloist, you have to spend time learning the boring scales, triads, and arpeggios. This will take a lot of work, but it will pay off.

Bass

The bass helps provide a solid foundation for the sound of the band. The job of the bass is to keep the pulse of the song. A bass player should work closely with the drummer to accomplish this. They should listen to the drums and the beat pattern, analyzing what the basic groove of the song is. It's recommended that any bass player practice with a metronome, so that their internal beat is sharpened.

The important thing for a bass player to know is the fingerboard of the bass. If you look at the fingerboard and this seems like a ridiculous demand, work on learning where the octaves are on the fingerboard. This will help you get a better feel of where everything is at. You need to memorize the names of the notes and where they are. After you've learned the notes, learn the scales. The most important scales to know for worship are the major scales, natural minor scales, and the Mixolydian mode. Also, work on arpeggios, which are chords voiced only one note at a time.

Normally, using two fingers alternately for picking is sufficient for any bass player. But practice alternating your fingers when picking, and practice picking in staggered intervals. This will help you to develop new grooves and be more creative in your playing.

Muting is really important. The bass is a monophonic instrument most of the time, so you want to make sure that you are only playing one string at a time. You can make sure of this by damping down on the other strings near the one you're playing to mute them.

If you think playing the bass is boring and is just playing the root of the chord repeatedly, think again. Learn to know your bass well enough so that you can be creative in your playing.

Incorporate different styles into your playing to create more distinctive bass lines. Make it interesting. But you want to avoid too much repetition while also avoiding excessive variation. Play thematically; establish a motif for the song. Get rid of all the fluff—don't try to do too much. Just stick with the basics, and then you can embellish from that. But in a worship setting, make sure that your main focus is on the notes that really matter.

You can use effects on bass as well, and these can be really effective (pun intended) in worship. There are different tools you can use to create new sounds like a chorus, a bass synthesizer, and others. Experiment with these to find the sound that fits.

Drums

Drums can add so much to a praise band. They can provide a lot of energy to a song that would be impossible without them. But the main job of the drums is to keep the beat. In addition to keeping the beat, drums can add a lot to the overall sound of the band.

The first things to focus on when you start drumming are to make sure the set fits you, and to tune all your drums. Make sure every part of the set is placed within your comfort zone and easy to reach. Tuning the drums is very important. For the snare, you want to get the best sound possible. To achieve that, you need to tighten or loosen the snare to the recommended pitch, which is usually a G. For toms, it is recommended that you tune the different toms in intervals of fourths. And for the bass drum, you want to get that nice deep sound, but make sure it's not tuned so low that it makes a flapping sound and sounds like a paper bag.

The most important thing for drummers to know about playing in a praise band is that they need to be in the background for the most part. Problems are caused when a drummer is too loud and can be overbearing to the rest of the band. Not only can it drown out the rest of the band, but then the old people in the church start complaining. There are definitely times for rocking out, but for the majority of worship music, know that the drums are to be the foundation of the music, not at the forefront.

Vocals

It's important to remember that leading worship is not like being on American Idol. If your purpose is to sound great and be awesome, then you should not sing on the worship team. If, however, you have a desire to submit the talents God has given you to lead to a time of intimacy and worship of God, then this is the right place for you.

The two most important skills for a vocalist to possess are listening and pitch-matching. Listening to what is going on around you will tell you what you need to do to fit into the mix. Pitch-matching means that you can consistently match the pitch of any given note at any given time. For some people, this is a natural skill, but for others, it must be learned. A lot of people think they can match pitches, but they don't yet have the skills to do so. It takes practice and effort to learn how to do this. Youtube is a great resource for learning how to sing. Just look up videos on the subject and practice, practice, practice.

Harmonies are an important part of worship. If you cannot hear harmony parts, stick to the melody until you can have someone teach you a harmony. If you lose your note at any point, revert back to the melody. Remember our motto: First cause no distractions.

Some songs will call for quiet singing while other songs are best served by loud, joyful expression. Use your full range of dynamics when you sing. It adds to the emotion of a song and allows you to convey the meaning of the song in a more expressive way.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals for the praise band should be planned ahead of time and well-structured. Whoever is leading should try to pick out what songs to work on ahead of time. That way, time is not wasted figuring out what to play. First of all, be task-oriented, focusing on what needs to get done. Remember, this is the place where you sharpen your sound for the glory of God. Use this practice time as an act of worship.

And leave room in your rehearsal for some fun. Praise band practice isn't the military, and worshipping God is not a chore. Goof around with the band a little, have some jam sessions. Have fun together, and if you are still glorifying God through your fun, it will positively affect your worship. Psalm 33:3 says, "Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and sing with joy" (NIV). We are to be joyful in our worship, but at the same time, play skillfully, because God deserves our best. Rehearsal is the time when we can practice both.

Performance

The word "performance" gets a bad rap in the world of worship. In general, the word gives the connotation of being all about us, the performers. Jon Acuff, the author of the book "Stuff Christians Like" has an interesting take on artists in the church. He writes, "Sometimes, as Christians we have this weird assumption that to celebrate your abilities and your gifts is a sin. As if quietly possessing them is holy and loudly living with them can only be an act of arrogance. But I'm not so sure anymore. They're not my gifts. I didn't give them to myself. I received them. And so did you. You are a unique work of art. You reflect an artist the world needs to know. He did not give you those gifts to hide them...Today, don't be a shy work of art. Be a loud work of art."

Worship is not about us; it is about God. Do whatever you can within your band to get that mentality to sink in, and set up your worship to reflect that. One thing that I like to do to assist this is to refrain from setting up the band in the center of a stage. Be off to the side a little, or maybe positioned behind something. Keep the cross central in a worship service.

On the other hand, the audience will feed off of you and is looking to you for direction and permission to worship. So make sure that your heart is focused on God. It will show through to the listeners, and if you are passionately worshipping, it can inspire them to do so as

well. It goes the other way, too. If you look dead and show no emotion at all, it could de-energize the audience.

This is the time that all your practicing and all that this handbook advises leads up to. This is the culmination of our expression of worship through music. Above all, make sure this is the time where you are completely submissive to God and the moving of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, you may have something planned out, but the Holy Spirit might lead you to play that bridge one more time at the end of a song or to just vamp on a chord progression for a while, creating a contemplative atmosphere. Be flexible and allow room for the Spirit to work in your hearts and the hearts of the people in the audience. Work out subtle signs of communication within the band in case you need to make quick changes.

Final Thoughts

There is no higher calling than to worship the Lord of the universe. It is what we were created to do. It is how we, as humans, connect with our Creator and give him back all the honor that is due to Him. What an honor and privilege it is to be able to facilitate part of that worship for people! As worship leaders, we have been called to usher people into the throne room, where they will have an opportunity to touch the heart of God. Pray that we will never lose sight of that mission. Pray that God will give us the strength, the resources, and the abilities to praise Him. Finally, pray that our focus will never be taken off of the Object of our worship.

What is the definition of worship?

A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell.-C.S. Lewis

wor·ship (wûr' shĭp)

n.

1.

a. The reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object.

b. The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed.

2. Ardent devotion; adoration.

[Middle English *worshipe*, *worthiness*, *honor*, from Old English *weorthscipe*: *weorth*, *worth*; see **worth**¹ + *-scipe*, *-ship*.]

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It is important to begin with a working definition of worship in order to draw any conclusions regarding worship ministry. Worship is complex and the following five definitions give us the broadest sense of meaning.

1) Worship is absorption with God rather than self.

2) Worship is an adoring attitude toward the person, attributes, and acts of a transcendent God, and a willful desire to conform to Him through obedience to His revealed will.

3) Worship is an act by a redeemed man, the creature, toward God his creator, in which the will, the intellect, and emotions gratefully respond to the revelation of God's person as expressed in the redemptive work of Christ. This can only occur as the Holy Spirit illuminates God's written Word to a worshiper's

mind and heart.

4) Worship is a quickening of the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with the truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God.

5) Worship is God's gift to us for our blessing more than His. His objective is not the securing of our adulation but our discovery and realization of advancement in His intended purpose for our fulfillment.

CONCLUSION: The act of worship implies communion and fellowship. The eternal, infinite God desires communion with man, and finite man in turn is capable of fellowshiping with the living God.

“Prayer is our occupation with our human needs and problems. We come to God with our needs and ask for His supply

Praise is the occupation of our minds with His blessings. We are thinking of all that God has done for us and give thanks for how He has blessed us.

Worship is our occupation with God Himself, with the greatness of His being”

-Ray Stedman

“The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists of shoving it all back, in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in.”

-CS Lewis

“Everything we do springs from our concept of what is important and valuable to us.” Ray Stedman

What We Translate “Worship”

GREEK

Latreia λατρεία 1. Service Rendered for Hire
a. Any service or ministration (the Service of God)
2. The service and worship of God according to the requirements of Levitical Law.
3. To Perform Sacred Services

Mt. 4:10, Lk. 2:37, Rom 12:1

Therapeuo θεραπευω 1. To serve, do service
2. To heal, cure, restore to health

Rev. 13:12

Sebazomai Σεβαζομαι 1. To fear, be afraid
2. To honor religiously, to worship

Rom. 1:25, Acts 16:14, Acts 18:17

Doxa δοξα 1. Opinion, judgment, view
2. Splendor, brightness, majesty (anything belonging to God)
3. A most glorious condition, most exalted state

Rev. 14:7

HEBREW

‘atsab 1. To shape, fashion, make, form into shape, worship

Jer. 44:14

‘abad 1. To work, serve
2. To make oneself a servant

Ex. 3:12, Ex. 12:31, 2 Ki 10:19-23, Ps. 2:11, Isa. 19:21,

Sachah 1. To bow down

Gen 18:2, Ruth 2:10, Jos. 23:7, 2 Ki 5:18, 1Chr. 21:21

What We Translate “Praise”

GREEK

humneo υμνεω

1. To sing praise of, sing hymns to
2. To sing a hymn
3. Singing of *pashal* hymns (songs from Ps. 113-118 & 136-The Great “Hallel”)

Mt. 26:30, Acts 16:25, Heb 2:12

eulogeo ευλογεω

1. To praise
2. To invoke blessings
3. To consecrate a thing with solemn prayers
4. To cause to prosper

Lk. 1:64, Lk 24:53

arete αρετη

1. A virtuous course of thought, feeling, and action
2. Any particular moral excellence, as modesty, purity

Ph. 4:8

HEBREW

halal

1. To shine
2. To act madly
3. To praise

I Chr. 16:4, 2 Chr. 8:14, Ezr 3:10, Neh 12:24, Ps. 105:45, Ps. 116:19, Ps. 146:10, Prov 28:4, Prov 31:31, Jer 31:7, Joel 2:26

yadah

1. To throw, shoot, cast
2. To give thanks, laud, praise
3. To confess the name of God
4. To confess sin

Lev 5:5, Num 5:7, I Kings 8:33, 2 Chr 6:24, Neh 1:6, Job 41:14, Ps. 32:5, Ps. 118:19, Isa 12:1, Jer 33:11

Check Yourself...What's Really Important?

Courtesy Pastor Bobby Sanderson

1. Is worship about God or is it about what I like?
2. Do I seek God's presence or the comfort of being with friends and doing what is familiar?
3. When is the last time God "blind-sided" me and spoke in a way I did not expect?
4. Am I so contemporary I lose the transcendence of God?
5. Am I so traditional that I forget God's relevance?
6. Do I see myself as part of an audience giving approval/disapproval to worship leaders?
7. Can God use what I don't like?
8. Am I more into music than the spoken word?
9. Do I ignore the command to sing just to get to the "message?"
10. Do I leave worship with a clear sense of what I'm supposed to do?
11. Is the style of worship more important to me than the object of worship?
12. Do I love God's presence as much as the songs I sing and play?
13. Can I worship God when it's hard work and my joy is running low?