

Music and Worship Ministry Guidelines - January 2022

“An effective worship leader, aided and led by the Holy Spirit, skillfully combines Biblical Truth with music to magnify the worth of God and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, thereby motivating the gathered church to join him in proclaiming and cherishing the Truth about God and seeking to live all of life for the glory of God.”

Bob Kauflin

Worship Development

Sovereign Grace Ministries

I like this description of an effective worship leader. In short, it reminds us that we as worship leaders are to share the Truth we know about our Great Redeemer in order to glorify Him and to lead others to Him.

Worship is all I know of me responding to all God has shown me of Himself. This response involves a choice, and the use of my mind, will, and emotions. Thus, everything a worship leader does should encourage that response in the people he is leading. God desires to bless us with His manifest presence when we gather to worship Him, and he even gives us a Biblical prescription to follow. (excerpts from Bob Kauflin)

God’s Biblical prescription includes:

1. Salvation
2. Love
3. Submission
4. Commitment
5. Humility
6. Edification
7. Holiness
8. Sincerity
9. Prayer

SALVATION

We must first know Jesus Christ in order to worship Him and lead others to Him.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”. (Acts 4:12 ESV)

(Romans 10:9-10, Matt 10:32)

LOVE

We are commanded to love each other as Christ loved us.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned,[a] but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;[b] 6 it does not rejoice at

wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:1-7 ESV)

SUBMISSION

In terms of submission, first and obviously foremost, we submit to God the Father. We hold firmly to Him alone and respect the responsibility He has entrusted to us to sing His Word. He is the reason for everything we do.

Secondly, we fall under the authority of our Elders. I am in close communication with our lead pastor (who is an Elder) and follow his lead as we prepare services week-to-week.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17 ESV)

Our music and worship leadership team consists of the worship leader and assistant worship leaders, the choirs, and the praise team/band, drama team, AV, youth worship ministry and any other music related groups as they participate in church-wide services. We share the responsibilities of this ministry, and we all work together in a coordinated effort to serve under our common purpose.

Often folks will join the choir to get to better know the church and to begin building relationships as they use their talents. Church membership is not required to participate in the music ministry. However, whether one plans to join the church or not, we invite those in this ministry who are not members to attend our Membership Matters classes in order to know exactly what Good Hope as a church whole believes, since serving in the music and worship team signifies one is standing in agreement with Good Hope 's theology.

COMMITMENT

23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Col. 3:23-24 ESV)

In order for us to fulfill our purpose, we must take this role seriously. These are not volunteer positions; these are called positions. This is not a role to fill because you simply like to sing. This is a ministry that requires your heart—a heart devoted to worship and leading others into it. Serving must be a priority in your life and, thus, requires sacrifice of your time. Your commitment to this ministry means that you agree to faithfully come to practice and sing even when you may not feel like it, even if you may not particularly like the song the choir or praise team is singing, or even if the practice is during your team's big game on TV. This ministry is not based on how you feel. It is all about being a servant who's heart is to honor God and to see the lost come to salvation.

"No one is ready to lead until he is willing to serve." - Alfred W. Martin

In addition to living out a commitment to the choir, we strongly encourage music and worship ministry members to serve in other roles in the church as your time allows. As we live out our faith through service, we add integrity to our songs and make what we sing more meaningful and real to those we are leading.

To lead effectively, our worship should be purposeful, not hit-or-miss. Worship does not just happen. We should intentionally prepare and then expect good fruit from our preparation. Romans 12:6 says that those who lead should do so diligently. This will require effort and oftentimes great effort. I read this example recently: "When we moved into our new home several years ago, my family's yard was a wasteland. But each fall I aerated, fertilized, and planted grass seed. In the spring, I applied fertilizer and weed killer. We watered.

For a few years it seemed like not much was happening. But here we are years later with a full lawn. What happened? We sowed, and tended, and then we reaped.” (Bob Kauflin, Sovereign Grace Ministries)

Members of the music/worship team should be involved in a weekly Bible study group of some sort (SS, small group, etc. . . .). We need to be fed and to have community with believers in order to feed others and ministry effectively.

So it is with worship. If we want God’s people to glorify Him, we must sow to His glory. We must prepare our minds and our hearts for worship so that others can see Jesus through us, worshiping throughout the week as well as on Sunday mornings. We must work to build our skills (playing instrument, using our voice, for example). Much of the time we will be “weary yet pursuing” as was Gideon in His service to the Lord. We must practice and prepare our voices. We must paint a compelling, attractive, grand, Biblical picture of our great God and Savior. We should bring our best offering to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 4:2, Proverbs 20:13)

HUMILITY

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
(Philippians 2:3 ESV)*

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psalm 51:17 ESV)
. . . and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.(from Daniel 4:37 ESV)*

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members,[a] and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,[b] with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

(Romans 12:3-8 ESV)

As stated above, the worship team is under the ultimate authority of Christ alone and any music we present must be presented to glorify Him alone. Self-glorification has no part in this ministry and honestly, those in Good Hope’s worship team are quite intolerant of selfishness.

God will not share His glory with anyone else. The results of a ministry that is girded with pride and selfishness are sure to fail. If your singing in the choir is dependent on you singing solos, then you are in the wrong choir. While we definitely want you at Good Hope to grow and learn with us, the focus of our worship team is not on show-casing individual talent. We function as a team. Obviously if we are intent on aiming for excellence in worship leadership, we are very interested in the way we sound and some may end up singing more solos than others. But a firm foundation regarding matters of the heart and soul and a clear testimony by the fruits of our spirit are the most important to us. In other words, you may have the best solo voice around, but, if it’s all about you or if it is obvious that there are areas of pride and even pride about un-surrendered sin in your life, then it is our prayer that God would lead you (and us all) to conviction and some soul-searching before joining our team.

God is faithful to provide for this ministry’s needs when we are seeking His heart and not our own. He’s proven that over and over again. Praise God!

EDIFICATION

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.[a] Never be wise in your own sight. (Romans 12: 16 ESV)

While many times music that speaks to the worship leadership team also speaks to the larger body of believers, we recognize that it is not our priority to present music that speaks to us as individuals at all times. It is our role to present music and set the worship environment that, first of all, glorifies God but secondly that will lead others—and the corporate body of believers to a deeper worship experience with God. This means that while you may not like traditional music or hymns, you will be asked to sing them. It also means that while you may not like contemporary songs, you will be asked to sing them as well. It is very important to remember that different people worship in different ways. What may seem worshipful for one may not seem worshipful for others. We must be very attentive to the needs of the congregation and not push head-strong with our own personal agendas. We must act out of love for one another. Once again, selfishness must be left-behind. Our philosophy is that as long as the songs are Scripturally sound, it is no sacrifice at all to be given the opportunity to sing for Christ no matter what the flavor of the song. Instead, we consider it an opportunity and a blessing. It is not about us.

In addition, while this should go unsaid, the music and worship team members are expected to participate and attend worship services on a regular basis unless serving with the children or elsewhere. We are not in the church services to simply sing. We are there to lead worship through music as well as through the Word and with our actions. We do not sing and then leave or only show up to services to sing or play an instrument. We support our leadership with our attention and our time. We are there for corporate worship to love and honor the Lord and to grow together as the body of Christ.

(Matt 23:22, 2 Corinthians 9:7)

HOLINESS AND SINCERITY

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.(2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 ESV)

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”(1 Samuel 16:7 ESV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world,[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12: 1-2 ESV)

If we are to lead others into worship, we should display an attitude of worship ourselves both on and off the platform. This requires that we spend time privately with the Lord--in prayer, confession, repentance, Bible study and worship-- throughout the week, so that our leading worship on Sundays is an out-pouring of what we have learned and experienced with God the previous six days. Each day we need to ask God to convict us of our sins and to take us a step closer to becoming like Him. We can never be satisfied with the status quo. We need to continually seek God to update our resume for Him. Live expectantly and be prepared to give an answer for what God is doing in your life.

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks

you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15 ESV)

Serving as a worship leader calls us to be people of integrity—the same on and off the platform. We must strive to be the same people at home and at work that we are at church. It is important to remember that the further we put ourselves out there in the spotlight in worship leadership roles, the more scrutiny our lives will be under and the higher level of accountability we are held to. When we take a position in front of a group of people, we will, to one degree or another, be leading, whether intentionally or not. If we are going to be effective worship leaders, we need to strive to live lives worthy of the calling, lives of integrity, lives that make our corporate worship time believable to others.

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. (from Luke 12:48b ESV)

(Ephesians 4:1, 12-13, Galatians 5:19-25, James 1:22; Psalm 24:4-5, Psalm 51:2; Hebrews 10:22-25)

This includes conducting ourselves in a Christ-like manner on social media (i.e. Facebook, for example).

This includes maintaining purity in our relationships.

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own. . . (1 Corinthians 6:18-20 ESV)

Also, as we need to present ourselves as living sacrifices, we all should dress in a manner that would not distract from our messages in song. The typical dress code for the worship team is “dress casual.” More specifically, women should dress modestly. Simply put: No strapless or backless tops, spaghetti straps, tightly form-fitting clothes, short skirts (no more than 2 “– 3 “above the knee) or cleavage exposed. Whether we like to admit it or not, we must concern ourselves about issues such as lust in the church too.

Along those same lines, no heavy perfume (in case of allergies).

PRAYER

. . .pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17 ESV)

Let me simply say: We need to pray, pray, pray. All the time. This includes frequently praying for this ministry and specifically others in it—that God would use us to spread His Gospel to the nations.

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
(Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV)*