



music ministry

the MINISTRY PAPERS

"she's the worship leader..."

I remember one of my friends introducing me to a friend one day while walking through Lismore.

"How do you know her?" I asked my friend,

"Oh, she's the Worship Leader at our church."

"What's that mean?" I asked.

"You know, she's in charge of the music, the bands and that."

"Oh", I replied. "When you say she leads the worship you mean she leads the music".

We hear that term a lot: 'worship'. In a lot of church contexts it conjures up images of singing, hand waving and great music: a special time when we 'worship' God. Unfortunately we're taking a word from the Bible and using it the wrong way, compartmentalising something that's meant to be the **whole of our lives**.

The Bible says in Romans 12:1-2: "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**. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."

The Bible makes it clear that worship is not just about music. It's about offering your **entire life in response to God's mercy** so that you'll be **transformed** to be more like Christ. By using the word worship in place of music, we're missing the point. Worship is doing everything, from cleaning the toilet to driving your car to playing music... as long as it's all offered to God for his glory. Of course, our singing can be part of this all-of-life worship, but only a part.

Before we offer somebody the title 'Worship Leader' we should think hard about what we're saying in relation to that person. In fact, as far as 'Worship Leaders' go it's hard to think of any one who deserves the title other than the one who has already offered himself holy and pleasing to God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LEADERS: before taking someone through this paper, review the 2 key intro MINISTRY PAPERS: 'the ministry training church' and 'meeting one to one'.

Connect. Grow. Serve. After **connecting** to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can **grow** is through a growth group and a vital way we can **serve** is through a ministry team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help your music ministry leader introduce you to what it means to serve as part of our **music ministry** team.

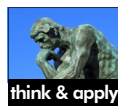


read Colossians 3:12-17

1. When should the word of Christ dwell in us richly?

2. What should our attitude be while this is happening?

3. As the music team how can we help the 'word of Christ' dwell richly in our church family?



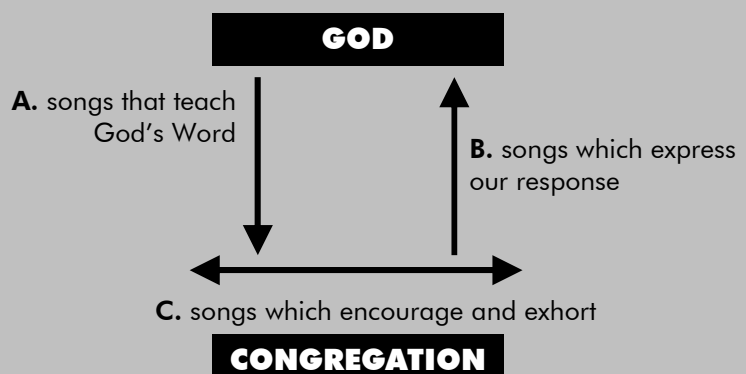
4. Do you help others to offer 'gratitude' to God by playing in church, or do you seek 'gratitude' for your self? Why?

5. What personal challenges are you aware of in terms of playing your part in this ministry team?

6. What role will being actively involved in your growth group play in enabling you to carry out this ministry well?



music ministry is **3 dimensional word ministry**



bible focus

The Word of God is central to gathering together as the people of God. The overall 'shape' of our meeting is: preparing to hear the Word; hearing the Word; and responding to the Word. Well chosen songs play an important part in achieving this shape. And as we saw in Colossians 3, Songs that are lyrically rich with the Word of Christ don't act merely in a support role to the bible reading and talk, but are very much a part of how the Word dwells in us richly.



read 2 Timothy 3:15-17

1. What is able to make us wise for salvation?

2. Where does Scripture come from?

3. What is Scripture useful for?



4. What role can music play in ensuring the Bible is at the centre of our church services?

what's the big idea?

There's a well argued case that most people are only really capable of walking away from a sermon carrying one central theme. If the preacher doesn't give one, then the listener will make one up for themselves. No matter how hard the preacher might try to get five separate points across in a talk, generally when asked what the talk was about, a member of the congregation will convey the single concept they took out of the talk.



At church we try to cater for the listener by preparing messages that convey one big biblical concept or one Big Idea, that will be clear and challenging to all who listen. To take it even further still, not just the sermon but the entire church service should be shaped around expressing that biblical concept, to try and ensure the seed of God's word is firmly implanted in the heart of the listener. This means:

- the **preacher** conveys the big idea to everyone involved in the service
- the **leader** points towards the big idea with everything they say
- the **musicians** play songs that convey the biblical concept being taught
- the **prayer** should build towards/respond to this same biblical concept
- the **singers** sing meaningfully, modeling understanding of the big idea
- the **sound person** ensures all of the above is actually heard

Communication between all involved, therefore, will be vital. All of this going well, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the seed of God's living word will be sown in the hearts of the congregation!!

the ultimate praise song...

Here's a song you'll find out there...

*Pour out Your Spirit
Pour out Your Spirit
Pour out Your Spirit on me
Pour out Your Spirit
Pour out Your Spirit
Pour out Your Spirit on me*

Accompanied by the right music, and sung several times through this song can give quite an emotional fix. The problem is, that's all it is – an emotional fix. Worse than that, the lyrics are contrary to the scriptures.

John 7:38-39 tells us that once we have believed in Jesus, God will 'pour out his spirit' on us: *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

Again in **Acts 2:38** *Peter replied "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"*

If as musicians we're meant to support the body of Christ by pointing people towards Jesus how can we do that if we mistreat his word? Perhaps this song would be better written:

*You've poured out Your spirit
You've poured out Your spirit
You've poured out Your spirit on me
You've poured out Your spirit
You've poured out Your spirit
Your Son has died for me*

I or we?

There are lots of great songs that are appropriately written in the language 'I'. But it's good also to have a number of songs that use the language 'we' or 'us' (e.g.. 'we are his people', 'give us ears to hear'). These songs help us remember that we are together as a church family to encourage each other – and that our singing is a corporate thing.

In fact, the song above could be changed to corporate language.....

*You've poured out Your spirit
You've poured out Your spirit
You've poured out Your spirit **on us**
You've poured out Your spirit
You've poured out Your spirit
Your Son has died **for us***

too bad to be true...

Music in church doesn't have to sound perfect to achieve the aims we've been talking about. However, it is possible to sound so bad that nobody can concentrate on the words, let alone be able to focus when it comes time for the Bible talk.

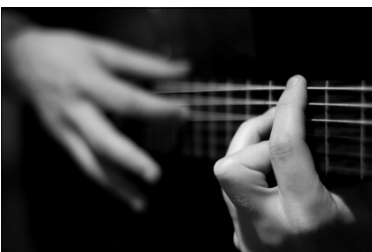
Imagine going to a church for the first time. You are greeted warmly. You are made to feel welcome. The first song starts up and it's a biblical classic like "standing on the promises". But now imagine the song leader singing loudly and a long way off key in a way that's very off-putting.

What's your reaction? Maybe a gracious, "well at least he's having a go". Unfortunately though, it might be just plain distracting. Far from re-inforcing the message of the Bible talk, many people will be greatly distracted from it. Perfection isn't the point, but we need to be careful about selecting the right people for the right roles.

If we want to help the word of Christ dwell richly in the hearts of our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can't afford to distract them from hearing God's Word.

So, think about your contribution to the music ministry at church. Some of us need to step forward to use our gifts. Some of us might need to recognise our gifts are in other areas. All of us need to make sure we are encouraging to others, not distracting.

1 Corinthians 14:22-25 reminds us that we need to assess what happens in our gatherings from the outsider point of view and make sure that nothing obscures the word of Christ. This can take the form of bad theology, as seen on the previous page. However, it can also take the form of a range of practical considerations we'll discuss on this page.



outsider focus

We have seen that the Word of God needs to be the focus of our music ministry. And as we see now, this is not just for the sake of building up believers, but for the benefit of outsiders also.



read 1 Corinthians 14:22-25

1. Although the context is about tongues rather than music, what principles does Paul set forth with regard to outsiders?



2. What are some possible implications music ministry?



pace & flow...

Pace and flow is about helping people maintain an undistracted focus on the big idea. Apart from the time it wastes, the time between when the song is introduced by the leader and when the musicians actually commence playing can lead to a distracting awkwardness among the congregation. It's almost as though the musicians didn't realise that the song was going to be played at that particular stage in the service, even though it's been the same for the last five years! Follow the program carefully, be ready to play promptly when the songs are introduced: it really helps the whole pace and flow of the service.



you're the voice...

There are a few things that are worthy of special mention if you're involved specifically with singing:



- make sure when you're singing the microphone is less than a 'fist-distance' away from your mouth. This way you're giving the sound person complete control over your volume.
- communicate with the sound person whether or not you're happy with the level of your foldback.
- note on the song words things like how many bars in the intro or between verses, and whether or not choruses will be repeated, etc

drumming for Jesus or sinning for Satan?

Pride is a terrible thing. Don't be a show off, it can be just as distracting as being too bad. A great way of showing '**gratitude in your heart**' to God is by playing in a way that helps others to focus on God and his word, not on you. It's far better to have no music at all, than music that draws people away from God's word.

how to look helpful

Being out the front during the service means that you're facing the congregation. This means that you have the opportunity to be not only aurally distracting, but **visually** distracting as well. Think through such issues as: the way you dress; your body language and facial expressions; modelling thoughtful singing.

making a commitment

This paper has emphasised that music ministry is being part of a team. That's crucial. But it's also to remember the wider context of our team, and to be committed to the church family we're serving.



read Hebrews 10:24-25

1. How can we spur one another on?

2. What are some in the habit of doing?



3. Why is it important to be committed to church if you're going to be involved in music?



playing together...

The best thing about this difficult ministry is that we're not in it alone. We play as a team. Here are a few ideas on how to spur one another on...



- **learn the songs before you turn up by practising at home.** This is a way of making sure your time together when you practice isn't about **you** learning the song, but it's about working out how to present the songs together as a team. Consider getting lessons to improve your singing/playing to be always growing in your contribution to the team.
- **practice together each week**, whether it's before church or at another time. Practising together gives you the opportunity to talk to each other about the 'music mission', and to ensure that you're working together to fulfil your role as part of the body of Christ.
- **get to practice on time**, it's a great way of showing you value each other's time.
- **work on the 'musicality'**. The way that you present a piece of music can have a significant impact on the way it's received. As you practice together work on things like intros, endings, drop outs, dynamics etc that would be helpful in conveying the big idea.
- **always have a pen to write on your music.** It's really important as you come up with different ideas and arrangements during practice, to mark it down. **It's distracting** to forget half-way through the service and start singing a verse when you should be repeating a chorus. Mark **everything** down on your music or song words during practice.
- **communicate with the sound man.** This forgotten hero is an integral part of the music team, if your foldback's not right, or the piano's too loud, or you can't hear the singers: let him know. Without open communication, all your efforts may be in vain.
- **pray together before you play each week.** Pray that God will give you humble hearts as you play, and that the people in church might grow in their knowledge of God. If it's possible, find out the 'Big Idea' of the service before you play and pray about that.

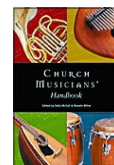
that toilet could sure do with a clean...



Before you consider yourself as being a 'Christ-like' servant of God's family you should consider who it is that you're serving by wanting to play music in church.

A good test of this is to ask yourself whether or not you'd be interested in being on the cleaning roster. These are the sort of jobs that are selfless and sacrificial, and only find motivation in the cross of Christ.

It's so important to see music as a way of serving the body of Christ, just like cleaning the toilet. All glory to God. Everything else needs to be flushed away.



the church musician's handbook

www.matthiasmedia.com.au is a must read for all involved in music ministry.

the forgotten hero

When the light bulb blows you realise the crucial role it played in lighting the room. When the sound person's not doing his job you realise what a crucial role he has in church. Here are a few **must dos** for the sound person in addition to the other points on this page that apply to everyone!):

making sure the Bible **reading** gets recorded as well as the Bible talk

walk around during practice and at least once during the service checking the sound

be attentive to what's happening all through the service (e.g. turn a mic down when someone's moving it; make sure different people using the same mic can all be heard clearly)

check the **position and functioning of all equipment** (e.g. mics, foldback speakers)

communicate continuously with all those using the equipment

pay specific attention to **portable mics** (battery working, any feedback coming through)

ensure there is **background music** before and after church and during the break (connected to the big idea)

make sure other behind the scenes equipment are attended to (e.g. crèche speakers, etc)