
BUILDING BRIDGES: PASTORS AND WORSHIP LEADERS

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I. The Current Situation

- A. Average length of employment for a music minister is 2-3 years. Why?
 - 1. change of occupation
 - 2. financial need
 - 3. relational issues remain unaddressed
- B. Conflicts and confusion between pastors and worship leaders are not a new problem.
 - 1. Pastors tend to view worship leaders as temperamental, late, unorganized, non-theological, trendy, unresponsive, proud, etc.
 - 2. Worship leaders tend to view pastors as controlling, angry, demanding, insensitive, out-of-touch, over-detailed, non-relational, proud, etc.
- C. We are called to glorify God not only in our public ministry but in our relationship with one another. (Rom. 15:5-6)

II. What a Worship Leader Can Do

- A. Serve your pastor
 - 1. Pastors are ultimately responsible for a church's direction and life (Heb. 13:17)
 - 2. Focus on serving the priorities of your pastor and not your own. (Phil. 2:3-4)
- B. Listen to your pastor
 - 1. Publicly and privately
 - 2. Make sure you're speaking the same language
 - 3. Clarify before responding
- C. Initiate with your pastor
 - 1. Encouragement
 - 2. Creative ideas
 - 3. Evaluation
 - 4. Willingness to step down

- D. Grow Personally
 - 1. Spiritually
 - 2. Theologically
 - 3. Musically
 - 4. Administratively
 - 5. Technologically

III. What a Pastor can Do

- A. Recognize your role
 - 1. The pastor is the primary worship leader, humanly speaking.
 - 2. Pastors are responsible for the whole meeting, not just a portion.
 - 3. Leading worship is a pastoral function before it's a musical one
 - 4. Pastors need to study and teach on worship in the Bible.
- B. Communicate what you're looking for
 - 1. In your meeting
 - a. Pursuing fads or biblical faithfulness?
 - b. Motivated by pastoral care or preferences?
 - c. Role of music in church gatherings
 - d. Order and structure of meetings
 - 2. In your worship leader
 - a. Humility – desires to serve more than impress, willing to submit to your vision
 - b. Godly example – devotional life, family, passions
 - c. Values good theology – may not know everything, but sees the importance of biblical truth

“Many worship leaders can’t name a single book on the theology of worship. Most denominations (admirably) require preachers to pursue rigorous seminary studies before preaching. Yet we require of worship leaders only that they be willing to attend a single rehearsal or committee meeting. We would do well to lovingly challenge our worship leaders to grow in the knowledge and love of God.” (John Witvliet, *Reformation and Revival*, Volume 9, No. 2, “*Discerning the Spirits*,” pg. 19)

- d. Leadership
- e. Musical skill – instrument, theory, technique

C. Equip and encourage

- 1. Budget for books, music, and CDs,
- 2. Budget for equipment
- 3. Conferences – worship and otherwise
- 4. Encourage specifically – growth, responsiveness, creativity, leadership, spontaneity, etc.
- 5. Encourage privately and publicly
 - a. builds faith in the people for following him
 - b. not in competition
 - c. don't encourage beyond your faith level

D. Plan and evaluate

- 1. Frequency depends on stage in relationship and maturity of worship leader.
- 2. Plan songs, but also meetings. (Bob Donohue's involvement, Josh's involvement in choosing songs here)
- 3. Evaluation shows you notice and you care.
- 4. Point out patterns rather than nit-pick
- 5. Evaluate specifically and soon

IV. Dealing with Conflict

- A. When considering filling or applying for a position, ask too many questions, not too few.
- B. In conflict, determine what the issues are.
 - 1. Methodology
 - 2. Theology
 - 3. Character
- C. Don't work with a pastor or worship leader you can't or don't trust.
- D. Don't bring your family to a church you wouldn't otherwise want to raise your children in.
- E. Get counsel from others you respect before you face a crisis or decide to leave.

V. Benefits of Being a Team

A. More gets done.

1. Give thanks regularly for the opportunity to work with your pastor/worship leader.

Eccles. 4:9 (NIV) Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

2. No one gets it right all the time. Be thankful that on days when you're off, your pastor or worship leader is on!

B. You have multiple perspective.

1. No musical style or order of service is prohibited or singled out by Scripture as being preferable.
2. Work together to determine what is best for your congregation.

There is so much in the Bible about worship activities that there is no reason for any church to limit itself to a set pattern that appeals to only one segment of the congregation. Worship in the Bible, in both Testaments, was varied in form, content, purpose, and mood; if the church wants to draw out the richness of worship...it will strive for greater variation within the proper forms and a greater balance in structured and free worship. (Allen Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 510)

C. God receives more glory.

The worship of God in your church is not ultimately dependent on a worship leader or the pastor, but on God's grace working through humble servants who desire His glory above all else.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 15:5-6)

VI. Question and Answer