

# PRAISE/WORSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

*'Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.'* Hebrews 12:28

## defining the vision

Worship... our wholehearted, captivated response, whatever outward form it takes, to God's infinite perfections. Countless saints have offered their definitions of this manifold concept down the ages. At once complex and simple, here are a few inspiring thoughts on worship:

- \* *worship*, what we give our worth, time, songs and heart to (to ascribe worth)
- \* Προσκυνεω (Greek verb 'proskuneo' meaning 'worship'), to draw near and kiss the hand of
- \* 'True worship is to be so personally and hopelessly in love with God, that the idea of a transfer of affection never even remotely exists.' (A.W.Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship?*)
- \* 'Worship is the total response of each individual to the call of God.' (A.C.Lovelace, *Music and Worship in the Church*)
- \* 'There is a sense in which we may think of the whole life of the universe, seen and unseen, conscious and unconscious, as an act of worship, glorifying its Origin, Sustainer, and End.' (E.Underhill, *Worship*)
- \* 'Authentic worship begins with exalting God, but is not complete until it issues into the action of reaching people.' (G.Hardin & M.Thielen, *Authentic Worship*)
- \* 'Worship is the dramatic celebration of God in his supreme worth in such a manner that his "worthiness" becomes the norm and inspiration of human living.' (R.Martin, *The Worship of God*)

There are also countless passages and verses in Scripture that speak of, or *are*, worship...

**Luke 7:37-47**... Worship is extravagant because it arises from a knowledge or remembrance of just how great the debts Jesus cancelled for us are, and his costly generosity in so doing. What can we bring that is costly?

**John 4:23-24**... True worship isn't about the music or the band. Music is a wonderful expression of worship, but not its essence. 'Worshipping in the spirit is the opposite of worshipping in merely external ways... Worshipping in truth is the opposite of worship based on an inadequate view of God. Worship must have heart and head. Worship must engage emotions and thought.' (Piper, *Desiring God*)

**Colossians 3:16**... worship is Christ-centred as it reflects thoroughly on God's word

**1 Chronicles 16:28-29**... He *is* worthy! Verse 29 also shows worship as a corporate act.

**Luke 10:38-42**... this picture of Mary and Martha challenges us to choose the 'better thing' (sitting at the feet of our Lord in attentive adoration) above all else.

**Gen. 8:20-22; 22:2, 11-12 and Romans 12:1-2**... these speak of worship involving sacrifice

**Acts 16:25**... worship isn't just for the 'good times' in life, but also a means of drawing comfort and strength for the hard times and battles we face. Who knows how God can use it in the lives of those who happen to overhear?

**Ps. 100**... an actual expression of worship, as well as being descriptive of and an invitation to it.

Different outward expressions of worship: feasting (**Ps. 22:29**), joyful songs (**Ps. 100:2**), sacrifices and offerings (**Is. 19:21**), walking and jumping and dancing (**2 Sam. 6:16**... also from this, note that worship may not be culturally acceptable).

Do contemplate and study these... and go in search of more – get hungry to learn about worship!

## **developing a vision**

In order to *lead well* and with **integrity**, it's important to **understand** and be personally **convinced** of the *role* and *importance* of worship within the CU. You can only teach others what you already know yourself – the type of worship you cultivate in CU will reflect your own understanding of and vision for worshipping God. Having a right heart before God in what you do is perhaps especially important for worship leaders and bands who are up front and 'in the limelight' so much. Hopefully, as you work on having a right and deep personal understanding of worship this will help to convince and envision you about it, which in turn can be **infectious!** So here are some ideas on developing a vision for worship:

- \* You could read about worship and keep track of the latest songs etc.
- \* Share stories with other praise co-ordinators and worship teams
- \* Try to develop a local as well as general vision for worship

But as well as this *visionary* side to being a praise co-ordinator or worship team, there's also a highly *practical* aspect – it's important to **know** what is **entailed**, and seek to *fulfil* that with **excellence**.

## **defining the role**

*'I am of the opinion that we should not be concerned about working for God until we have learned the meaning and delight of worshipping Him. A worshiper can work with eternal quality in his work.'*  
A.W. Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship?*

The role of a praise co-ordinator or worship team will of course look slightly different in each CU due to differing sizes, structures etc. But here's one way you might consider viewing your role:

A *worship leader* is uniquely placed to **teach** people...

### ***...about worship***

How do you think the majority of your CU understands worship? Sadly many people still think that 'worship' is just singing songs. The words don't mean anything to them, they don't let it connect with their lives, and don't even think about *why* we worship, what motivates us to express such delight, awe and wonder. You could say they've lost sight of the object of our worship, the person it's about. So worship leaders are key in reminding people what worship is, why we do it, who it's about, teaching them about *true* worship. Try...

- \* using Bible passages or quotations to explore and explain worship  
You could do this from the front during a main meeting, via small groups/prayer meetings, or even handing out little slips of paper with a quotation on as people come in. If you're going to give any explanation from the front, keep it short and bite-sized (not boring and long-winded)!
- \* lobby the Committee to include teaching on worship in small groups/main meetings
- \* give input gradually and patiently  
Drip feed the CU teaching on worship, don't try to tell them everything all at once – you'd be there forever! Also, bear in mind that it may take a little while for people to grasp the concepts you're trying to put across.

### ***...through worship***

Which part of a CU meeting do you remember most readily: the talk or the songs? Because songs are more easily remembered than talks worship leaders are amongst the most influential 'theologians' in a Christian fellowship. The songs we sing teach people about

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God and about living for him, and worship times can be used both to prepare people for the talk and to help them respond to what they've heard (perhaps by choosing songs whose lyrics link with the theme of the talk). So...

\* choose the songs wisely

In doing this it's important to evaluate the content of a song as well as valuing the variety of different types of songs available to us. Make sure that the lyrics convey truth, and mix more repetitive songs with those that develop an idea in their words.

\* use the songs to help the CU *prepare* for the word

\* use the songs to help the CU *respond* to the word

### **...to worship**

How did *you* learn to worship? This is about showing others the way and giving them the best opportunity you can...

lead the way

It's all too easy for musicians to get caught up in the musical side of things, but whilst doing our best in this way we need to make sure we are also throwing ourselves into worship.

take others with you

As well as worshipping personally, we need to be aware of how the rest of our group are getting on, so that we're not leaving them behind, but can guide them forward sensitively & appropriately. A model you might find helpful is: *invitation, engagement, exaltation, adoration, intimacy, close*. This is a way of structuring a longer worship time (even a whole meeting – not all the parts have to be sung) that is sensitive to the way people function. It's hard to come in after a long and busy day and be expected to meaningfully get straight into a love song to Jesus that should be sung with deep intimacy. Likewise if we're going through tougher times, we may not immediately feel like exalting or adoring all God's wonders. By starting with an 'invitation' phase, we accept people where they are and call them to worship – this helps people to focus. The 'engagement' part is where people begin to draw near to God and address him in their worship; moving into 'exaltation' is about declaring God's greatness powerfully. This naturally leads into a more reflective and unhurried 'adoration' of all that you've just been exalting, which finally takes you into the most personal stage of all, 'intimacy'. The last part, 'close', is to help people adjust to whatever they go on to next – the rest of the meeting, or out of the meeting to the rest of their day. So that's about being sensitive to and respecting the way human beings function on a psychological level. You may also (especially given the interdenominational nature of CUs) need to consider how to be sensitive to and respectful of where people are coming from stylistically. It's a sad truth that people do get hung up on style issues in musical worship so do think about how you can incorporate different styles, or how you can explain different ways of doing worship to help those who are less familiar or comfortable with it to participate.

aim for technical excellence

PA problems, faltering musicians and an unclear leader all discourage and disrupt the people's worship. So: give clear direction (tell people whether to sit or stand; musically ensure that the CU's line is prominent and easy to follow), do a sound check every time, practice the music (make sure songs are a good pitch/speed, bridges are smooth, and be musically interesting/creative!)

vary the external forms of worship you use

As well as using music groups with different instrumental and stylistic make ups (e.g. 4-piece rock group, classical ensemble, folk instruments, 'unplugged' acoustic sounds etc.), try different ways of doing worship in CU. You could: ask people to reflect and praise silently while the worship team play or sing through a song; give out pieces of

paper and get everyone to write their own psalm in silence; use worship CDs; involve art or movement; introduce international songs; do something involving 'call & response'... etc.

In summary: seek to serve **God** in your *praise* – it's all about him, not us (no matter how much we're up front) or the music... and to serve **people** in the *practicalities* – you're there to help them learn to worship, so put their needs about your own interests.

### **tips for leading worship in a meeting**

- \* Read & understand the passage, and if possible chat with the speaker and person leading the meeting beforehand
- \* Choose songs wisely (watch out for content; follow a logical progression of themes; decide whether it is revelation or response centred, where it fits in the '*invitation*—> *intimacy*' model, and so where it would be best placed in the meeting; make sure new songs can be adequately taught)
- \* Pray together before you practice, not between practice and meeting (it's *all* for Him!)
- \* Be word centred, interdenominational, creative, prepared, clear, brief, sensitive, confident, reverent, and point to God!

### **tips on leading a group (e.g. of worship teams, worship leaders or musicians)**

- \* Leading a group of worship teams, worship leaders or musicians (and don't forget the 'soundmen' – they play a vital part!) is a great opportunity for discipleship (regular encouragement to follow Jesus) and learning together about worship and leading others in it. You might want to consider:
  - \* using the time you have together as a group to talk through the meeting, the truth to which you are responding, & its daily implications
  - \* encourage them to give input as you plan a meeting and feedback afterwards – this team approach will be of benefit all round
  - \* pray for them and with them
  - \* meet up with them individually outside of rehearsals
  - \* spend time together socially as well as practising and preparing meetings

### **notes for praise co-ordinators**

- \* encourage the Committee to be a worshipping Committee and to lead by example in this respect too – keep it on the Committee's agenda, suggest studying it in CU/small groups/Committee meetings if appropriate/necessary
- \* invite appropriately-gifted CU members to join the worship teams (in September and throughout the academic year), and try to make sure that these groups don't become cliques
- \* organise worship team rotas – these give people a break and allow for different styles
- \* be aware of worship resources, seminars etc and encourage your team to be learning and growing in their understanding of worship, ability to lead others in it, and repertoire of songs/styles
- \* take care of CCL matters – ensure the CU is worshipping with integrity

### **a few resources...**

*The New Worship (Expanded Edition)*, Barry Liesch (Baker Books, 2001)

*Extravagant Worship*, Darlene Zschech (Bethany House, 2002)

[www.ichthus.org.uk/worship/](http://www.ichthus.org.uk/worship/), [www.grahamkendrick.co.uk](http://www.grahamkendrick.co.uk) and [www.familyworship.org.uk](http://www.familyworship.org.uk)

**Finally, one invaluable resource: your Staff and/or Relay workers will of course be more than happy to help whenever they can!**