wildpear

DAN WILT

HOW TO LEAD WORSHIP

AN 8 WEEK STUDY

WITHOUT BEING A ROCK STAR



SESSION 4
EFFECTIVELY LEADING WORSHIP

"So don't be afraid to learn by doing, even though the earliest steps are sometimes slow and awkward. You'll never get anywhere unless you start at square one." [13]

Andy Park

Let's assume a few things. You probably either (predominantly) play the guitar, or the keyboard. Most worship leaders lead from one of these two instruments. Why? Because they are common to contemporary music, they are harmonic (accompaniment) instruments, and they can be used to musically and rhythmically lead a band. (Personally I lead mostly from the hammered dulcimer, and new leading instruments are finding their way to church platforms across the world).

If you play another instrument, good on you! If you play no instrument, you probably lead alongside a keyboardist or a guitar player. If you play the tuba, there will be more for you in our next study, *Leading Worship From Instruments That Are Downright Painful To Play*.

This first section of this chapter, "Leading Worship," will be addressed to all worship leaders, whether you are leading worship in a living room, or in front of thousands. The second section, "Leading A Worship Band," will be addressed to those leading along with other musicians.

Our last section of this chapter will address relating to your pastoral leaders, mentoring other worship leaders, and making progress as a growing worship leader.

Leading Worship

"I started off leading a bit of worship in college but I was really, really dreadful at it, and was encouraged never to do it again! At the same time, some of my other friends said, 'You've got something in there.'

I felt so insecure that I just thought I'd never do it again.

But when I moved to Glasgow after college to get married, a guy there asked if I would become the worship leader in his church. I felt a nudge from the Holy Spirit that this was something He had in mind for me to do.

So, in fear and trepidation, I decided I would give it a go, and the Lord showed up. It was great."[14]

Kathryn Scott (*Hungry*)

Worship leadership is both an art and a science. Worship leadership is the

profound combination of effective musical skill, organization and preparation, experience, practice, calling, character, intuition, gifting and God's grace.

Given the nature of the mandate of the worship leader, to effectively facilitate the worship interaction of God's people with Himself, both the heart and skill of worship leadership need some attention.

Back To The Basics

An experienced and capable worship leader steps up to the microphone, guitar in hand, as the congregation prepares themselves to respond to the love of God. Anticipation to engage with God through the music is high, and the worship leader begins to gently strum the guitar.

Then, just as the first words of the song are about to be pounced upon by every soul in the room, everyone starts to feel their throats tightening up. The opening melody is about to be far higher than they can sing! The worship leader abruptly stops the music.

"Oops. I've got the capo on the wrong fret. Sorry about that!" He stops, changes the capo position, and counts the band in again. Laughter ensues among the band members and the congregation. "Let's try that again," he quips, and this time the song is in the right key.

How Do We Get Back To Effectively Leading?

Believe it or not, at a recent gathering of experienced worship leaders and teams in the southern states, two highly experienced worship leaders made this same mistake at the beginning of a song – and I was one of them!

We know how to prepare, rehearse and lead a consistent and effective worship set – we may have been doing it for decades.

Yet sometimes we still struggle to pull it off skillfully and from a good heart – every time. Sometimes we all need to go back to the basics. Even musicians keep up their rudiments, their licks, and their chops.

Here's some straight shooting from a fellow worship leader.

1. Cultivate Your Own Heart As A Worshiper – Alone.

Let's get practical. It's time to move the glitz away from worship leading and contemporary recordings – your authority to lead worship depends directly on your secret life with God in worship. The reality is, tomorrow you may strap on your instrument and begin to artfully play some worship songs that you love.

However, if your own self-expression is the hidden heart behind what you do, or corporate worship is the only place you express yourself before God with those songs musically, then your authority to lead worship will show itself increasingly empty and lifeless over time.

Great music can hide a hollow heart to some degree – but only to a degree. Is your secret life with God a vibrant life, where God is the center of your personal worship experience? Are you cultivating your musical leading skills in the secret place of worship as well as the secret place of rehearsal?

If you focus on your secret life, concentrating on your musicianship will become second nature as you worship personally, and as you lead others. If your personal life is empty, and your interior life is smaller than your exterior life, your worship leadership will amplify a striving soul behind the songs.

Trust the voice of experience on this one. Find your life with God, up and down as it is, before you lead others in their life with God. Find it.

Fight for it. Foster it. Besides being important on it's own, finding your growing life with God will empower your worship leading.

2. Build Simple Sets Around The Character Of God, And The Faith.

Songs about who God is, strung simply together, consistently move souls toward the greater Story that underlies our lives. Songs about how we feel about God, or even how He feels about us, may season a set well and be biblically represented, but make for sappy sets when strung together all in row, all the time.

When leading remember this rocket-science equation for good worship leading, when good songs are selected and the heart is engaged: Sing a song, finish it, sing another song, finish it, sing another song, finish it. People have come to worship – lead them without meandering around musically. Sing the song, and get out of the way. Let the songs lead.

Make it a priority to create sets that celebrate God's character and intimately express worship through songs that remind us that God is the center of the universe, and we are invited into His grand Story.

Values such as intimacy, accessibility, integrity, cultural connection, and Kingdom expectation can guide us into less whimsical, and more well-planned and value-laden worship experiences. These corporate worship sets last for the long haul, and further the Kingdom story in our generation and in our communities.

3. Care More About Your Congregation Engaging Than Your Platform.

It's simple to say, but hard to do. If that platform means more to you than your congregation finding a regular, rich, consistent and beautiful meeting place with God, then it's time to step out from behind the guitar, microphone or keyboard.

To become the kinds of leaders who equip others, and give away opportunity in order to see living worship advanced in our community, we must love the Church more than we love playing, leading or singing.

Take the time to wrestle with this before God. It's worth the process, and your worship leadership will be forever changed – as will the worship life of your community.

A Simple Pattern For Building A Worship Set

One of the most helpful tools that I've had in my worship leader's tool-belt over the years has been this basic "3 Step Set" approach to building a worship set.

Over 20+ years of worship leading, I've watched the following approach to building a worship set work consistently as a flexible template.

Note that this "hidden format" can bend and morph easily, and I've built 2-3 hour sets based on the following structure, repeating the pattern.

1. GATHERING
Invite the community to worship with an opening prayer, reading or scripture, and then a song (or songs) that "gathers us and reminds us what we are here for." *Come, Now Is The Time To Worship* is a contemporary example of an invocation song that works well.

2. CELEBRATION
In this section, we focus on "God Songs" as we celebrate the nature of God, His unchanging character, His attributes and Story alive among us. Our attention is not on our feelings and responses particularly, but rather on Jesus and God's nature.

This is the core of our time of musical worship – appreciation and thankfulness. *How Great Is Our God* is a contemporary example of this kind of song.

3. RESPONSE
This final section is the point where we respond to God's self-revealing with songs of surrender, prayer, intimacy and choice. We've sung about God's nature, now we offer ourselves with love and allegiance to Him and His purposes. *Here I Am To Worship* is a contemporary example of this kind of song.

If you're stumbling along in planning small group, large group or conference sets, this helpful template has enabled many to overcome the "Stumbling Set Blues." I'd encourage you to experiment it as you plan your next few sets, to see how it works for you.

(Note: This flow actually maps, on some level, with the traditional 4 fold structure of worship gatherings – i.e. The 1. Gathering, 2. Word, 3. Table, and 4. Sending pattern. In this structure, music is just a part of this progression. In many lengthier contemporary sets, it actually can guide how a series of songs are linked together.)

There is no indication of fast/slow, etc. intended in the above progression either – basic principles of flow and transition apply here.

How This Pattern Could Be Applied To Different Set Lengths

- If I am doing a 3 song set, I will pick one song for each category, GATHERING, CELEBRATION, and RESPONSE.
- If I am doing a 6 song set, I will tend to pick 1 song for GATHERING, 3 songs for CELEBRATION, and 2 songs for RESPONSE.

- If I am doing a larger set (8 songs or more) I will simply keep the principles in mind, and flow between them.
- If I have time to only do 1 song, I will tend to choose either a GATHERING song, or a CELEBRATION song, according to the event.

Again, these are just general rules of thumb that may prove helpful in the planning of your next set.

Song Selection And The 3/3 Approach

In my own worship leading work, my song selection is based generally on a 3/3 (1/3, 1/3, 1/3) approach when it comes to genres of songs.

You can modify this to suit your own resources and focus in your church, but here is the general 3/3 principle I go by:

> *1/3 of the songs I use are contemporary worship songs* that are well-respected, known and fitting to our community. This is the *contemporary part* of the set.
>
> *1/3 of the songs I use are historic, traditional and ethnically diverse*, connecting us with the Church throughout the ages. This is the *ancient-future* part of the set.
>
> *1/3 of the songs I use are written in our community*, by those with a primary calling as seasoned (and growing) songwriters. For us, the bar is high in this area, and these writers are writing songs based on pastor's messages and themes it seems that God is speaking about to our local church community. This is the *indigenous* part of the set.

Foundations For Leading An Effective Worship Set

So, I have my GATHERING, CELEBRATION, RESPONSE set pattern generally in mind. I choose songs for each section that are based on my 3/3 approach, caring for tempos, keys, etc. Now, I have built my set and am ready to lead.

Here are just a few foundations, learned from the school of hard knocks, that enable us to lead effective sets. After looking at these, we'll get very practical on how to actually execute the set in detail.

> *Play The Songs With The Tightness Of One Who Is Recording.*
>
> This is a tough one for today's worship leaders to grasp. Let's not mince words – *forget sloppy playing* – it just doesn't work and distracts people from engaging with the song. A poorly connected set, musically, can't be blamed on the Holy Spirit and us just "flowing."
>
> Granted, raw music, unrefined and spontaneous, can still breed beautiful worship experiences. However, that is the exception and not the rule. When we try to make it the rule, it may just reveal that we are too lazy to get good at what we do. How's that for honesty?
>
> Without intentional development, many worship leaders play like they did when they were younger, and were slamming out tunes in a garage band. Without taking care that every strum is full and exact, and every picking pattern solid and clean, worship leaders begin to just strum and pick away without thought to the tightness of their shared performance. We may think its cool, but it's not. It's just distracting.
>
> Performance is not a bad word if the heart is engaged with God and the people. The recording studio makes demands on

musicians – timing problems, buzzing strings, erratic picking, clunky and busy playing, tuning and vocal issues all rear their heads in the naked sound of the studio. In the studio there is no crowd energy to hide the fact that we're unrehearsed and not sure what we're doing! Studio musicians *must* play well, or the track is bad and unusable. Period. It's distracting.

So, rehearse, get great at your instrument, work toward excellence in your sound, tone and playing. With a great heart leading, and good music being played, our worship gathering is lifted. Log in hundreds of hours (over years, of course) leading worship, playing in studios, or practicing to click tracks.

Play with recordings until the tempos of the songs are in your head, and you've learned to play with good timing. Learn to arrange a band well (that's coming up) and then lead it with confidence and musicality.

Good music usually facilitates worship expression; bad music usually hinders it. Simple. Minimize distraction; maximize beauty.

Have A Theme, And Plan Your Set Accordingly.

Whether it's a church year season, or your pastor's sermon notes, or your own heart leading as you pray about the worship time you are about to lead, do your best to find a theme, and lead people on a journey through a few songs.

In a recent gathering, I led one song with New Testament roots, one song with early Church roots, one song with Reformation roots, one spiritual and a contemporary worship song. The theme of the set was to engage us with the riches of worship history. Every song didn't say the same thing – but they all elevated the

character of God and the essential Story of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus.

Respond to the themes given at each event, and look for key words and phrases in songs to build your set.

Plan First, Go With The Plan Second, Be Spontaneous Third.

If we start out always trying to do something spontaneous and "spirit-led," our worship leading will become loose and ineffective. Conversely, if you always over-plan, your expression may become rigid and formal.

Plan a set well, then plan the structure of each song (ex. intro, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, chorus, end). Rehearse and lead it that way. Know that when a chorus is begging to be repeated, you can do that. Plan well first, then follow the plan, then be free to lightly season the set with some spontaneity.

Your band will learn to trust you if you generally stick to what you rehearsed – which helps the band succeed musically (this is important to musicians).

Three Phases Of Worship Leading

Both experienced worship leaders and budding worship leaders are in need of some pause and reflection today in our "worship as industry" climate. If we're desperate for God, it will come out in the music over time, and others will evidence that same desperation for God as they join in with us.

So, we build our sets well, and practice our instrument, leading from the center of a vibrant walk with God. We have a privileged job to do, and that

job flows out of the hidden life we share with God as musicians and worshipers. Find your life with God, learn the craft of effectively executing a set of songs and liturgies, and you will have a lifetime of leading worship effectively.

For the purposes of this quick glance at the skill of worship leading, we'll now break up the worship leading experience into three phases:

The Pre-leading phase,

The Present-leading phase, and

The Post-leading phase.

We'll look at each one in point form, and offer many tips from seasoned worship leaders who learned to lead in the school of hard knocks.

THE PRE-LEADING PHASE

In the pre-leading phase of worship leading, there is a fair amount of homework to be done. As the old maxim states, "Prepare to be spontaneous." Many of my own frustrations as a worship leader, and for many other worship leaders I know, lie in this area of leading. A few tips from the school of hard-knocks may help avoid some of the pitfalls you may be experiencing in worship leading.

> ***Recognize that you are there for the congregation*** you are about to lead; they are not there primarily to be your audience. In other words, you are a servant to this group of people you are leading, and your role is to do whatever it takes, to sacrifice whatever it takes, to lead this group to a place where they can joyfully meet with God.
>
> The congregation is not there to be our captive audience, to watch us express our gifts or to show them our stuff. Regard

the stage as God's, a place to express His fame, and all will be well. Congregations intuitively know if the worship leader is giving to them, or taking from them. Be a giver.

Use the instrument you lead with often in your personal times of worship. The more time you log in on an instrument, the more you are playing it instead of it playing you! Get more and more comfortable worshiping alone with your guitar or keyboard, or other instrument. If you can, worship and practice the songs in the environment you will regularly lead in (the church sanctuary or hall). Let the sound of the system become familiar. Practice, and worship, with CDs. It all helps.

Choose songs that the group you are leading knows and loves. When planning a worship set, the lion's share of the songs should be tunes the congregation loves and knows. Intersperse those songs with one or two new ones, but even those should be lingered over for a few weeks until the group owns them. You may have to rehearse and play a song 30 times before the congregation is even beginning to know it by heart. Don't move on too quickly for the congregation, even though the song has become tired for you.

Practice a structure of the song that seems to work, i.e. verse/chorus/verse/chorus/chorus. Let the team have something to expect, and then change plans only if necessary in the midst of worship. Don't leave too much to the spontaneity of the moment. Unless your players are all professional musicians, not knowing what to expect can be disheartening and frustrating instead of "spiritual and spontaneous."

Rehearse personally before you rehearse with anyone else. This helps for quicker learning of the songs together, security

for other musicians, expedited rehearsal time, and impartation of your love for the song.

Be well prepared for rehearsal in other details. Make sure the team has accurate chord charts (and/or music) for each song they don't have. Remember, paper is cheap. Save time by having extras on hand so you don't have to run back and forth to the photocopier. If your team doesn't have worship song binders, get them binders yourself.

Pray and select songs that you love to play. If you are confident and enjoying yourself, chances are that others will follow your lead.

Select songs according to the season of the life of your church. Have an updated master list with keys, style of the song, and the title in front of you so that you can see the whole banquet before picking the portions for the week.

Memorize the songs. Memorize the songs. Memorize the songs. Now, don't run away. Just read on for a moment. The distraction of looking at charts, music, and/or lyrics can be deadening to your worship leading. If you have memorized the song, you are free in worship to look at the congregation, the team, and to hear the gentle whispering of the Spirit.

Leading from chord charts can be too mechanical otherwise, and can be distracting to you and the worshipers. (When is the last time you saw your favorite band play with chord charts or lyrics in front of them?)

Try this method. Play the song over and over again with the chart, then try it over and over again without the chart, peeking at it section-by-section as needed. After you have memorized it, play it over and over again without the chart,

and try to do that each day until you are going to use it. I have played any one song (especially harder ones) at least 20 times before I've tried to do it live without charts.

Having worked that hard on the song, you probably won't forget it with people in front of you, and you probably won't forget it for a long time to come! If you don't have a song memorized, don't beat yourself up over it, or worse yet, don't try to play it half-memorized!

Distraction hinders congregational worship, and good, smooth flowing music facilitates it. Use chord charts if you must.

Listen to the quality of your instrument. It makes beautiful sounds; play it gently and with care, lest it rebel. Let the music breathe, and learn from better players how not to "fill all the space" with your playing.

Make small musical steps in your playing week to week. In other words, trying something just a bit new (I.e. make your pinkie do something it didn't have to do before) each week will eventually add much more seasoning to the meat and potatoes of your worship leading.

Make a list long enough to pick and choose from. Have plenty of gathering, focus, and response songs for a variety to draw on. I often have one or two songs that I feel like the time will hinge on. Head for those songs with the others, and draw on them if you hit a moment of "sweat and standstill."

Be highly prepared before "Sunday morning" so that you can focus on the Lord, the team, and the heartbeat of the morning (or gathering) without being harried to tie loose ends. Most worship leaders have found that Sunday mornings

and events have enough troubles of their own without adding to those troubles by last-minute panic-preparation. Do as much as you can early on in the week.

Be familiar with "vamps." Vamps are chord progressions that you can improvise over in worship, and that you will probably use to introduce the song and to linger on if the moment is appropriate.

Often, the vamp is the chord progression between the chorus you just sang, and the next verse you are about to sing. Rehearse vamps with your team. Give the band a feel for where you will probably use them. Again, prepare to be spontaneous.

Remember that the capo is your friend. This is for guitarists. In preparation for worship, sometimes variations of the song in high-end guitar can accentuate the sound beautifully. It also allows a second guitar to play the lower-end chords without musical or rhythmic clash. If one guitar is playing high, with a capo, a second guitar can be playing low without a capo for a great sound.

Make it a habit to initiate communication with the pastor or the leader of the gathering early in the week. They have the ultimate responsibility before God for the equipping of the saints, and to facilitate the ministry that God is wanting to do.

Find a consistent way to ask the pastor what the Lord is putting on their heart for the gathering, or for their teaching, and actively look for scriptures, songs, etc., to facilitate what God is giving them. Don't wait for them to track you down for input. Usually they have a million things on their mind that week and are blessed by such a request.

THE PRESENT-LEADING PHASE

In the present-leading phase of worship leading, we are in the moment, executing the set, and leading the musicians. Being in the moment, new dynamics present themselves that were not part of the rehearsal, or our practice time in our bedroom.

People are staring at us, we are being spiritual and practical leaders of a section of our service, and expectations are all around us. Here are a few tips on leading as you actually do it.

Assume that the people have come to meet with God. "When can I go and meet with God?" the psalmist asked (Psalm 42:2). When you prepare to strike the first chord on your guitar or keyboard, assume that the reason everyone has gathered is because they *want* to meet with God. If you start there, you will be less inclined to cheerlead the congregation or say lots of things as you simply lead people to a place where they can have their heart's desire. You are at your best when you are facilitating people's worship – not making something happen with psycho-spiritual religious gymnastics.

Consider beginning the time of worship with a brief prayer, a passage of Scripture, or a word of encouragement. I find that this is a quality way to bring a moment of much needed focus on God for those who are gathering, for the team, and for me. The Bible has some very encouraging things to say about God and us; you really ought to read it publicly sometime!

Keep your eyes open most of the time. We often label the closing of our eyes as an intimate show of communion with God. When done for that purpose, it is quite appropriate. However, I think we do it many times because we don't want to see the train wreck! Or if the train is wrecking as we go

along, we shut them to avoid the pain in others' eyes!

The faces of the people are not always an accurate measure of the effectiveness of the worship time, but making contact with people through your eyes is very important. Many times I smile as I am singing at dear saints a few rows back, and for that moment we are celebrating together.

We model that we are corporately worshiping by our connectedness and demeanor at the front. Closing our eyes all of the time can distance us off from the very people we are seeking to lead.

Sing clearly, confidently, and sing the melody. When you lead, lead. Mumbling creates insecurity in your leadership, and singing confidently gives a strong sense of direction. It is not controlling to lead confidently, but rather it is very freeing for the congregation (by "confidently" I do not necessarily mean "loudly" – a boisterous worship leader can be as distracting as a timid one). As well, avoid trailing off on too many flourishes or harmonies when you are the worship leader. Unless the whole congregation knows the song so well they could each sing it to you backwards (the song, not them), it will distract and confuse the masses if you venture too far from the melody in the context of leading of the song.

Shoot toward making the playing of your instrument second-nature. This refers to what I mentioned before. The more fluid you are in playing your instrument, the more freed up you are to listen to the Lord's instructions as you go. I can be thinking of 25 different things in the middle of a worship song. "Boy, it's good to see them here this week," "She looks like she is really hating all this racket," "Lord, touch Tom while we play this song," "Oh, I forgot to call him this week!" or "I wonder what we should have for lunch?" You know what

I mean! We sometimes miss the next chord when we are distracted. The better prepared we are, the less chance of goof-ups that distract.

Avoid "indulgent worship." What I mean by "indulgent worship" is worship experiences that are meaningful to you, and maybe even to the band, but lose the people. You are there to serve their expression of worship and intimacy with God. Long instrumental times, or long prophetic rabbit-trails are not always God's highest, especially for a Sunday morning.

Conferences and special celebrations I find much different than small groups or Sunday mornings. Be careful not to justify indulgent and loose leading with a spiritual label. Humbly ask your pastor if you are unsure of the appropriateness of some of your choices as you lead. They are called by God to be in touch with the people, and will have some ready insight.

Talk about your body language, and how you use it in a set, with your team. My team is well-trained to watch, watch, watch me. They've come to know, generally, my body language, what the intensity in my voice means, what the strumming of my guitar is leading to, etc. Verbalize it if necessary. My drummers watch the head of my guitar and my left leg closely! They know that if I want to speed up or slow down, they will see it there first.

Consider starting each song on your guitar or lead instruments, at least for a few bars. This enables me to re-orient my tempo (which is often necessary) before the band comes in and sets it in stone.

I remember times in my early days leading worship when I

would start off playing in the wrong time signature, and was thankful that the band was waiting for me to find it!

A solid tip – after you finish one song in your set, begin to sing the *chorus* of the next song in your head before you start strumming or playing that next tune. This trick will help you to lock into a sense of the tempo and timing of the song before you start to lead into it.

Have signals with your sound person. He or she should be watching you anyway, but it is good to have agreed-upon signals about sound that don't require your hands to be involved.

Keep consistent eye contact with the lead pastor. It is crucial to remember that none of us lead in a vacuum. We are called to lead together in distinct roles.

The pastor is called to have a sense of the overall pulse of the gathering of the saints in your local congregation, and it is crucial to maintain communication with them (verbal and non-verbal) and walk in submission throughout your part in leading a gathering. This goes for smaller groups as well.

Sometimes I have even stepped down from the stage to have a brief exchange with my pastor (in unique circumstances), determining where he is sensing we should go in worship. We are not mavericks, just doing our own thing. We walk in submission to those God has given primary oversight, and our gifts and leadership follow suit.

Remember that your sound person is part of the worship team, and is not just there to serve you. Be sensitive to their needs as they work to be sensitive to yours, even in the midst of the worship set.

Don't just barrel through ministry times; they can be the most sensitive and exciting times to learn to hear the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor people as you lead in ministry times. Pray for people through the songs. Let God use you in those precious moments of Him speaking into hearts.

THE POST-LEADING PHASE

In the post-leading phase of worship leading, we have concluded our set, or service, or small group. We're finished, right? Wrong. It is what happens after leading a set that lays the foundation for the next time we will lead. In this phase, we examine our hearts, ask for input, and learn so we can create more effective spaces for corporate musical worship.

Always remember to first ask the Lord, before anyone else, what He felt about the worship time you just led. Success and failure are events, not people. Before you go seeking others' affirmation, or throwing your guitar through the nearest window, quiet your heart before the Lord (you can even do this immediately after your part in the service, in the comfort of your seat) and receive His love and input. I am often surprised by what I sense the Lord's perspective was on a time of leading.

Receive input graciously. Sometimes you will receive encouragement, and sometimes you will receive criticism from people around you. Respond with grace to each remark, and remember to lay each one before the Lord for His Glory and your discernment.

No matter what spirit a comment is brought in, ask the Lord

if He wants to speak to you through it. If it is a remark of thanks, honor the person and respond in kind with "You're welcome." Remember, if "it was all God" and none of you, it would have been much richer of an experience for everyone! He used you, and He receives glory if you give it to Him in your heart. Honor the gift of thanks the person gave you.

Learn from your mistakes. Have someone video-tape you leading worship sometime. You will be amazed at things you see that you never imagined so consistently occur! Remember little boo-boos and big bomb-aroos, and make sure that they don't happen again if you can help it. If not, laugh a lot. It eases the stress.

Take the initiative to ask your pastor/leader how they felt the worship time went, and if they have any input. After they pick themselves up off the floor, they will respond to your teachability with some invaluable thoughts and perspectives. Receive what is said with humility, and take it before the Lord. Even if you think they don't have a clue because they "weren't worshiping like everyone else" was, submit the question anyway. You'll be surprised how far a little check-in like that will go.

Always, always, always, give the glory to God after you have led. Sit down at home, or in the car, and hand it all back to Him. A friend of mine speaks of "glory" as being like radioactivity. It's powerful stuff, but if you hold on to it too long, it will kill you.

Keep it all centered on Jesus, especially in a generation that glorifies and idolizes musicians.

We have a stage and platform, whether we are in a living room, sanctuary, or stadium.

As a worship leader, we are called by God to be good at our practical worship leading skills for one purpose alone – to create a space where people can connect with God.[15]

Session 4
Reflection Questions

If you are doing this with a group, take some time to write in your answers to the following questions before you gather. Highlight page numbers, key quotes and ideas that moved you. Make sure you write in the margins, circle words, or anything that will help you interact with the material and remember core ideas.

1. What ideas moved you the most from this section?

> Talk about the ideas related to worship that particularly moved you during your reading.
>
> How might the ideas that moved you help all of us to understand what worship is really all about?

2. Talk about the GATHERING – FOCUS - RESPONSE model of building a worship set. How does this help?

> Think about how you went about about choosing songs and building a worship set the last time you did it. What motivated your choices of songs? How much focus did you give the lyrics, and how did they fit in with this general model? How could this framework help you build your next set?
>
> If you have time, build a set based on this model together as a group (if doing this study with a group). Pick a theme coming up at the church, and go from there.

3. What new skills did this session help you begin to think about acquiring?

> Many different worship leading skills and tips were discussed in this session. What arenas of growth can you see being the most important to you right now?