Going from Song Leading to Worship Leading

by Mark Cole

Leaders, how do you go from just leading songs to leading worship? How do you get a congregation to get past just singing songs to actually worshiping God? Let me suggest some insights to help you grow as a worship leader.

Signs that you are a Song Leader:

1. You pick nice songs to sing but the congregation never arrives at worshipping God
2. You are not sure about what to do when the introductions and endings of songs are being played
3. You don't have a worship destination in mind when choosing the flow of your worship set
4. You mostly just sing the notes on the page
5. You don't encourage the congregation to engage in the attitudes and actions of worship
6. You are not sure what the attitudes and actions of worship are
7. You just sing the songs and hope everyone sings along

See: Attitude Is Everything (The Attitudes of Worship) & Actions Speak So Loud (The Actions of Worship)

Signs that you are a Worship Leader:

1. You love to worship God at home when nobody is watching
2. You worship God during rehearsals
3. You understand what the attitudes and actions of worship are
4. You engage in the attitudes and actions of worship in private and in public
5. You memorize the music so you can focus on God
6. You have a worship goal in mind when you plan your church worship set
7. You encourage the band and congregation to engage in the attitudes and actions of worship

Years ago I attended a conference with an internationally known worship leader. It was inspiring. It was evident that this leader had memorized all the music and was intent on doing the two main jobs of a worship leader:

1. **They were worshipping God personally**
2. **They were leading and encouraging the congregation and band to worship God.**

How did they do this?

1. They had a worship destination in mind

They were intentionally picking worship songs that helped people focus on singing directly to God. By the end of the set they weren't singing songs that just talked about God. They were singing songs that caused people to sing directly to God. They picked songs that helped people worship God, not just sing about Him.

Different songs have a different focus. Some songs are about God, some songs are about the theology of God, some songs teach us. Some are fast, some are slow. Some songs challenge us and some help us express our feelings. And some songs are personal prayers directly to God. Understanding the purpose of the songs you are choosing is so important.

It was evident that this worship leader's goal was to get people to move people from general corporate singing to encountering God personally and singing directly to Him.

2. They had done the necessary rehearsal to move past the music to worshiping God
It is so important to know the music so well that you rarely have to think about it. And it is important to have great rehearsals with your band and singers so they can do the same. If all the people on the stage haven't done their 'due diligence' in learning the music then the congregation gets the sense that were just going through the routine of singing songs.

3. They flowed well from one song to another
When they planned their worship set they also were also intentional about how to transition from one song to another. They didn't allow changing songs to break their focus on worshiping God. They had worked out the logistics of what player started the next song so they could keep their heart focused on worshiping God and leading the congregation to do the same.

4. They kept their focus on God and leading people through the whole worship time.
There can be a lot of distractions when you are in front of a congregation: people coming in late, media problems and a myriad of other small details. But a strong worship leader keeps their focus on worshiping God and leading the congregation to do the same. A strong worship leader knows the main thing is keeping their heart, mind and worship set on God and helping the congregation to do the same.

What other suggestions do you have to help leaders move from just singing songs to worshiping and leading the congregation to worship God?

Mark Cole: Jesus follower, Husband, Father, Worship Leader, Writer, Pastor, Church Consultant, Founding Arranger for Praisecharts.com, squash & tennis player, blogger & outdoor enthusiast (biking, hiking, skiing).



The article above and many additional insights may be found on Mark's blog at http://markcole.ca/

Check out Mark's new book - "Leading Worship ~ Notes from a Grand Adventure" available in Kindle or Soft Cover Editions. This is a great gift for the musician or worshipper in your life.