

Music Ministry in the Local Church.

Definition of Christian Worship

- The clearer our understanding of worship, the more meaningful will be our experience in worship.
- Disclaimer: Christian worship cannot be defined with our limited words of expression
- Christian worship is not easy to describe in formulas or creeds and liturgies [(the service which Christian renders to God in faith and obedience); it can only be experienced.
- Just as it is impossible to comprehend God fully with our own small minds, so is the worship of God. However, there are elements of worship that we are able to grasp.
- Theopedia Definition: Worship is an active response to the character, words and actions of God, initiated by His revelation and enabled by His redemption, whereby the mind is transformed (e.g. belief, repentance), the heart is renewed (e.g. love, trust), and actions are surrendered (e.g. obedience, service), all in accordance with His will and in order to declare His infinite worthiness.
- When we worship, we are declaring God's worth.
- Judson Cornwall "it's an attitude of heart, a reaching toward God, a pouring out of our total self in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, and love to the God who created us and to Whom we owe everything we have and are."
- The angels sang, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain," and every creature answered, "To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Revelation 5:12, 13-14).
- When Isaiah saw the vision of the Lord high and lifted up, he declared, "the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3).

To worship is:

-To quicken the conscience by the holiness of God

-To feed the mind with the truth of God

-To purge the imagination by the beauty of God

-To open the heart to the love of God

- To devote the will to the purpose of God.

- This means that worship involve all the faculties of our being. It's not a headless, or mindless or heartless activity.
- Worship is a believer's response of all that they are- mind, emotions, will, and body- to what God is and says and does!
- The hope of Church revival depends on a renewal of genuine worship. When we try to worship for the sake of certain benefits that may be received, the act ceases to be worship.
- God's offer of love elicits our response in worship.
- A vision of God demands a worship response because God is worthy of worship.

Praise and Worship

- ✓ Praise is joyful, melodious, demonstrated, and declared, praise directed toward God.
- ✓ The energy of praise is toward what God does, the energy of worship is toward who God is.
- ✓ Praise is concerned with God's performance, worship is occupied with God's personage.
- ✓ Praise is more concerned about God's presents than God's presence.
- ✓ Praise is an exuberance in the human soul/spirit that is expressed to God, while worship flows from God's Spirit Who is resident in the spirit of man.
- ✓ Praise is an expression of our life, worship is a lifestyle
- ✓ Praise is an act of our will, and it can be stirred into action by the working of our emotions, but worship involves the entire life.

Note:

- Christian worship is not singing slow-paced songs with slow beats, although this might be part of worship. And praise is not necessarily singing fast paced songs, with dancing and jumping and doing all manner of things. I do a lot of these, but it is important to realize that praise is much more than that!
- Worship is not music; music is just a vehicle used in worship.

Think about this:

In Genesis 4 when Cain and Abel offered worship through bringing their offerings to God, it was an act of worship. Do you think they came singing and dancing before the Lord?

In Genesis 22:5, When Abraham told his servants to wait for them as him and Isaac go to "worship" What do you think he was telling them? Do you think he was telling that they are going to sing some slow paced songs then come back?

In Exodus, Moses was told by God to go and deliver the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt so that they may go and worship God. Was Moses being instructed to go and sing. If we reduce worship to singing and music, then it is only for a limited number of people who are able to sing.

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the well in John 4. When Jesus told her that the true worshiper will worship the Father in true and spirit, do you think Jesus was referring to making music?

- Worship is bigger than singing and making music.
- However, there is a place of Music in Christian Worship.

What is the Place of Music in Christian Worship?

- Music is the most universal means for expressing human emotions. Music often exceeds the spoken word in expressing moods and feelings of the soul. Psalm 150:3-5; Revelation 14:1-3

- Unfortunately, in the modern church, praise and worship has become synonymous with music and song. Whenever we talk of “worship service” or “worship experience” we refer to a congregational gathering comprised largely of music and song.
- It’s interesting that “In the New Testament, music is given a much less prominent role than it receives in the church today. It is important that our dependence on music as a part of our worship of God may, likewise, need to be reduced so that we can sincerely praise God without distraction or purely superficial emotional displays.” www.biblestudying.net/worship.html

-There are 13 Greek words used in the New Testament to refer to worship (or any derivative thereof). These 13 Greek words for “worship” appear a total of 80 times in the New Testament. Linguistically none of them inherently invoke any reference to or for musical accompaniment or singing.

-Of these there are only 3 passages when “worship” involves music and singing. These passages are accounts of angelic beings, the 144,000, and others praising God, singing, and playing harps (Revelation 5:8-9, 14, Revelation 14:2-3, and Revelation 15:3.) None of these passages are instructional for church gatherings to include music or singing.

-Similarly, we can do a word study on praise and its derivatives. There are a total of 9 words used in the New Testament that refer to praise, appearing a total of 33 times.

-Basing on the above surveys we can conclude the following:

1. *From a definitional point of view, biblical praise and worship do not necessarily involve or require music or singing.*

2. *There are 4 places in the New Testament where singing and playing music (harps) are involved in specific instances of praising God. (Acts 16:25, Revelation 5:8-9, 17, Revelation 14:2-3, and Revelation 15:3).*

3. *There are 3 places in the New Testament that instruct us that we can sing to one another using spiritual songs in a corporate setting (1 Corinthians 14:15, Ephesians 5:19, and Colossians 3:16.)*

This biblical study reveals that music and singing had a pretty minimal role in New Testament church life and corporate gatherings.

-In contrast, there is a lot of emphasis on proclamation, teaching, and understanding of sound doctrine. For example, Jesus in His ministry to the disciples and other people. Its only after the Last Supper, that Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn before they went to the Mount of Olives.

-In addition, the Greek word for teaching (didache) and the related verb (didasko) are used 130 times in the New Testament. There are also numerous direct and indirect commands in the New Testament regarding the importance and centrality of the Word of God to the life and growth of Christians, both corporately and personally.

-This comparison should clearly and conclusively demonstrate the imbalance in emphasis that the modern church has placed on singing and music as a significant element of our church meetings.

Justin Martyr, a Christian writer of the middle of the second century reports that typical church gatherings included reading the scripture, teaching, prayer, collecting and distributing support for persons in need in the church community, and the communion meal. Music and singing are not mentioned.

- Music is not essential to worship, but it is a useful and effective aid in assisting believers in sincerely worshipping God. Music should point us to the object of worship: Jesus Christ, not a distraction. Music should be Christ-centred, biblically sound and God-glorifying.
- Music should therefore be aimed at sharing the Gospel, teaching the oracles of God. So if music is devoid of the Gospel, it has no value in Christian worship!

Constituting a Music Ministry Team

-Change is a process. Be patient!

-Instil the culture you would like to see in the team. You must lead by example.

-You must be a servant leader.

-Recruiting members of a team: God is a God of excellence. There's a difference between perfectionism and excellence. Excellence simply means giving your best! Insist on excellence. Psalm 33:3

-Set rules and regulations

-Set a vision for the team in line with the vision of the church/organization.

-Be clear about the expectations before one joins the team.

-Grow leaders. Equip your team. Expose them to new things. Grow them musically, but also grow them spiritually.

-Plan! Plan! Plan!

The Worship Leader

-The main role of the worship leader in a worship service is to create an atmosphere where the oracles of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be taught and received with gladness.

-The leader not only speaks God's Word to the congregation and speak on behalf of the congregation, the leader is also part of the congregation.

- Prepare for the service as the leader. Have a definite plan for the flow of the worship service. Don't just appear a few minutes to the service and think that you will go as the "Spirit leads." May the Spirit lead you to prepare before He leads you on the pulpit. Prepare through practice and prayer. Soak yourself, your team and the songs in prayer.
- As a leader, you must develop relationships with the people you lead. This relationship is not developed on the pulpit but in the small groups and on one-on-one.

- Be authentic. Be yourself and speak in your natural tone of voice. Your pronunciation of words that you use on a daily basis should not change immediately you go on the pulpit. Your main aim is to communicate to God and to the people.
- Be time conscious. The term “as the Spirit leads” is an excuse for lack of preparation. I have to admit that there are occasions when the Holy Spirit might prompt the leader to continue lingering in His presence in worship. Start and end in time.
- Be sensitive to the congregation and to the leading of the Holy Spirit. (Vertical and horizontal). Avoid any format of distraction (dressing, words used, funny facial expressions etc). I think I need a lot of help in this area, especially facial expression 😊
- The worship must worship *before* and *while* leading others. You don't ask people to kneel down you yourself aren't. You don't ask people to sing while you watch them.
- Encourage congregational participation! **The primary musical expression in worship is congregational participation;** not the choir and instruments. As you plan for worship service, provide an opportunity for the congregation to express itself through singing.

Every Blessing in Christ!

Other resources: Why Sing?

- [Part 1: Wanamuziki ni watumishi wa neno pia](#)
- [Part 2: African beats](#)
- [Part 3: Gospel reasons for worship](#)
- [Part 4: New Covenant worship](#)
- [Part 5: Pilgrim affections](#)
- [Part 6: True worship](#)
- [Part 7: The role of music and quality songs in church life](#)