



Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

Psalm 34:3

On Worship Leading

with Pastor Steve

Help Would Have Been Nice

When I first became a worship leader I had little training as a musician or singer. I had taken a few voice lessons years before and had taught myself a few chords on the guitar. When I started learning to play guitar I had no idea that I would ever lead worship. Being asked to lead worship was a total surprise to me. It was something I neither aspired to do nor felt qualified to do.

I grew up in and attended a Methodist church until I was in my mid 20s. The norm for Sunday worship consisted of a choir director who led the congregational music then a choir special. At times there would be someone who would perform a solo special. Don't get me wrong I'm not knocking this. I sang in many choirs and did many solos and musicals. The experiences I had were positive and laid a good foundation for my future calling.

After leaving the Methodist church I became a youth pastor in a non-denomination church. The style of Sunday morning worship was somewhat different than the Methodist church I had attended. The worship leader was more of a front man. There was a band instead of just piano and organ. Instead of a choir there was an ensemble. We sang for several minutes without interruption and there seemed to be flexibility for the Holy Spirit to lead.

To my knowledge, prior to becoming a worship leader, I had never seen anyone lead worship with an instrument. As a youth pastor I had led our small youth group in worship, but that was the extent of my experience.

Needless to say when I took the worship leader position I had some work to do. At the time I was working a full time job so I spent almost every minute away from work studying worship and practicing music. I read everything I could get my hands on about worship and worship leading. I attended conferences and seminars at every opportunity taking home as much information as possible. If there was a way to get other worship leaders and speakers to pray for me I was in line. I watched videos and listened to audio tapes for hours. I put myself through school. However, there was still one thing I lacked; a mentor. There was no one to model and no one to train me.

Oh how nice it would have been in those early days to have had someone, in the flesh, to help me along. I did have a great pastor who mentored me in the ministry, but he didn't have experience as a worship leader. He didn't know how to put together a worship service, choose band members or lead rehearsals. Much of this I learned by trial and error which kept me in trouble much of the time. A good mentor could have made the process less stressful and taught me things I could never learn in books.

Everyone sensing the call of God to lead worship should spend quality time reading books on worship and doing bible studies on the subject. Conferences and seminars are helpful. Take voice and music lessons if you need to. But, whatever you do, hang out with someone who is leading worship. Attach yourself to someone who can lead you along; someone you can model and who is anointed in worship leading.

Watch how they lead worship and how they relate to the band and other members of the worship ministry. Ask them to mentor you. While you are waiting for your turn to lead, wash their feet and learn to serve. Be teachable and always be open to correction and rebuke. Though it may be unpleasant you will gain valuable wisdom. It is during this process that the mantle for leading worship will be passed to you. You don't want to lead worship without that blessing and anointing.