



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

Psalm 34:3

On Worship Leading

with Pastor Steve

I Finally Got It

In 1986 when I became the worship leader at Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Anniston, Alabama I had very little confidence in my guitar playing ability. I had only been playing for a few years and had not led worship with the guitar except in small group settings. After taking the reigns as worship leader I was content to allow our pianist to be the lead instrument. Most of the time I didn't even play the guitar because many of the songs we sang I had not yet learned to play.

Our pianist was extremely talented. She not only knew how to play but why a piece was played a certain way. She was very well known as the premier piano player in our area. Once we had a few rehearsals under our belts she could follow me wherever I took the worship. The band revolved around her skill, and I grew increasingly dependent upon her presence.

A few months into the process, due to her husband's illness, she began to miss church on a regular basis. The main problem was that we would not know until we got to church that she would not be able to come. I found myself spending Sunday school time changing the song list we had practiced earlier in the week to songs I could play on the guitar. This put a lot of pressure on me not to mention the rest of the band and the singers.

A couple of months into this problem me and a friend of mine attended a Vineyard worship conference in Anaheim, California. The turning point in the conference for me was the testimony Carl Tuttle gave of how he began to lead worship in the Vineyard movement. So much of his story was my story too. I began to realize God had called me to be the worship leader not the piano player. God assured me that he knew my playing ability when he called me and that he had not made a mistake. He validated the anointing he had on me and filled me with boldness and determination to carry out his calling on my life.

When I arrived home from the conference I began to work harder at my guitar playing. I simplified the song list by removing songs too

difficult for my ability and adding songs I could easily teach the worship band. If I could not play it we didn't sing it until I could. I spent hours listening to cassette tapes so I could strum the right rhythms to songs. Each week my confidence grew as a musician and leader. Though I had never seen myself as a musician (and still don't) I knew God had called me to be a worship leader.

A week or so later our pianist showed up for practice one evening sort of out of the blue. She had missed several practices and we had not heard from her. It must have been a shock to her when she realized I had somewhat revamped the way we were doing worship. The guitar (my guitar) was now the lead instrument. (Let me say here that this lady didn't have the attitude that she was in charge. Out of my insecurities I had allowed the worship team to be built around her.) The following week my wife and I met with her and asked that she resign. I knew this would leave me without a piano player, but we believed it would be best for the team and for her. She concurred and graciously stepped down.

There are times in any ministry when you have to choose who you want to lose. If a team member is having problems that affect the entire team it is always best to confront the situation lovingly but with honesty. To leave a problem unattended will eventually cause disruption in the entire team or ministry. You gain the respect of team members when they see that you are genuinely concerned with each person and the ministry as a whole.

The following Sunday after the pianist resigned a young lady came up to me after our worship service. She had noticed that our piano player was absent a lot and wanted to know if there was any way she could help. I said yes, and she became our piano player for a season. God supplied what we needed.

God doesn't always call the qualified, but he always qualifies the called. He is the one who demands the glory. It is his strength that is made perfect in our weakness. Jesus took some bread

and a few small fish once from a little boy and fed thousands. If we offer to him all that we have he will multiply it and use it feed others. The key is knowing that he is the one who has called you,

because *who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.* (1Thessalonians 5:24 NKJV)

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