



The Worship Leader: Mentor and Shepherd

by Pastor Steve

An important role of a worship leader is that of a mentor. The scope of mentoring includes at least three groups of people; the congregation, the singers, musicians and others involved in the worship ministry, and those who are called to be worship leaders.

For a worship leader to be an effective mentor he must not only be a worshiper but also encourage others to worship. This is accomplished by modeling and teaching worship in corporate and small group settings or whenever the occasion presents itself.

Whenever I think of mentoring I am reminded of the words of King David in Psalm 34:3, *Oh magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.* First David says, "I am going to magnify the Lord; I am going to be worshiper. Let me show you how it is done." Then he invites others to join him by saying, "Let's magnify the Lord together; do it with me." The role of a worship leader is the same. In essence the worship leader should be saying to the congregation, "I am going to magnify the Lord, here is how you do it, come do it with me." This is called modeling and is a vital aspect of mentoring.

One of my favorite things to do is to invite a group of people to my home for a time of fellowship, maybe on a Friday or Saturday evening, and at some point pull out the guitar and start worshipping. Some of the best worship services I have witnessed have happened at impromptu times. Doing this sends the message that, as a Christian and a worship leader, worship is a high priority in my life regardless of where or when I do it.

Teaching is also a vital aspect of mentoring. This can be accomplished in several different ways such as teaching a Sunday school class, a brief lesson before Sunday worship service, conferences, news letters and casual conversation.

Over the years it has been my pleasure to take members of the praise team to worship conferences. On many occasions I have either paid their conference fees or hotel room so they could afford to go. I have also bought guitar strings and other accessories for those I have mentored. It is important that a worship leader invest time and money to encourage others to be worshipers.

The last role of a worship leader, and maybe the most important, that I want to mention is the role of a shepherd. The role of a shepherd includes all of the things that I have suggested in these two articles plus one important factor; the personal touch.

A worship leader must love people. His desire to see others worship should never come from selfish motives. People should never be viewed as projects. When people are viewed as projects there is the tendency for a leader to become a pusher. A shepherd leads, he doesn't push. Have you ever tried to push a string? When you push a string it just wads up. People are the same way. They will respond positively to a leader, but they will respond negatively to a pusher. For the most part they will discern when a leader is plagued with selfish ambition or if he has their best interest in mind.

One way to discern a leader from a pusher is whether or not the person is willing to get his hands dirty. By this I mean that the leader is willing to get involved in the personal lives of those he leads. The worship leader may be enthusiastic about teaching someone to worship but is he concerned if they don't have the money to buy groceries or pay the power bill or that they have a rebellious teen that is causing them grief. A good shepherd cares about the total person. When a worship leader/shepherd shows genuine concern about the welfare of others and is willing to get involved however possible, it builds trust. It is impossible to lead without trust.

Jesus said, *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.* (John 10:11) Laying down his life for those in his trust is a characteristic of every good shepherd. A worship leader may be a great singer or musician but if he is not willing to lay down his life for the sheep he doesn't need to be placed in such a vital ministry. The ministry of worship leading is a very visible ministry, as visible as that of a pastor. It is imperative to fill that ministry with someone who has the heart of a pastor; a heart for people.