



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

Psalm 34:3

On Worship Leading

with Pastor Steve

The Head and not the Tail

I vividly remember the first worship band practice I led as a fulltime worship leader. Here I am the worship leader of a church that was once two churches. Many of the members of the praise team I didn't know nor was I totally convinced I wanted to know them. The truth was I didn't want to be the worship leader. Only out of submission to the pastor's request was I in that position. At first I had no job description, no training and no clue as to what I was doing.

The night of our first practice Murphy's Law was in full swing. If it could have gone wrong it did. To start things off the pianist didn't show up and didn't let me know that she wasn't coming. This really left me holding the bag. I was still unsure of my guitar playing ability and counted on her to be the lead instrument. Some of the songs I had chosen to use I couldn't play on the guitar. I found myself changing the song list while all the other band members watched intently.

The pianist was a member of the "other" church. Many questions swirled in my head; most of them out of my own insecurity. Does she not like me? Did she not approve of the merger? Would she show up for church on Sunday? Can she play the songs I am going to use or should I even have her play since she didn't come to practice? There were no guidelines. No one in spiritual authority was there for me to consult with. I was hung out to dry.

Secondly, I had asked another young lady in the church to do a special song during the offering. She didn't show up either. Once I had gathered my wits and plotted a new course of action, I began to share the order of worship with the praise team. Imagine my despair when some of the members began to complain about certain aspects of the service. I wanted to cry. I wanted to gather my belongings, walk out of the building and never come back. Somehow we managed to put together the first week's service.

Upon arriving home I shared with my wife my intentions of meeting the pastors the next day to

resign. I was emotionally spent. I felt used and unappreciated and really thought no one cared how I felt. This was not a pity party, I was really hurting.

What I want to share next is in no way meant to be offensive, but I want to share it to show how the mercy of God touched me at a very low time in my life. As my wife and I lay down to sleep that night I said to her, "I am nothing but an ass." She assured me that was not the case, but I insisted and gave several examples to back my claim.

The next morning I got up early to attend a five o'clock men's prayer meeting at a local YMCA. We met in an upstairs room with several chairs and tumbling mats scattered out for us sit or kneel on. While some of the men prayed aloud, I slipped out of the chair I was sitting in and knelt on one of the mats. Even with my eyes closed I noticed the room getting strangely dark. I opened my eyes to investigate and found that several of the men had gathered around to pray for me. One or two of them knelt beside me putting their arms around my shoulders. Others laid hands on my head.

As this was taking place one of the elders leaned over and whispered in my ear, "The Lord wants you to know that you are the head and not the tail." Imagine the shock! You have to understand that none of these men had attended band practice the night before, and certainly this elder had not heard the conversation I had with my wife while we were in bed. The word he gave could have only come from God. God used that word not only to encourage me but to break me so he could make me the worshiper and the leader he intended for me to be.

If you are a "fledgling" worship leader, struggling to figure out who you are and what you are doing, be encouraged that God has called you for such a time as this. He is using circumstances and yes, your insecurities, to mold you into the leader he wants. Don't get discouraged and give up. Look through the fog of despair and see the hand of God. Take refuge in the shadow of his wings. His blessing is on the way.

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,
says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to
give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)*

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