

Worship Ministry Handbook

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide an overview of the worship ministry at VCF Santa Rosa. As you read, be sure to look up any scripture references that are given. What is worship? John 4:23 & 24 states: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (NIV) From a study of this text we derive the following expanded definition of worship: *"To revere and give homage to God, serving Him through profound adoration, intense love and desire, intimately turning towards Him (as if to kiss), exposing our essential in-most selves in complete honesty and surrender."*

Why do we worship? God is looking for worshipers! (Luke 19:40). He desires to manifest Himself to them and through them! (II Chron 16:9, John 4:23 & 24, Psalm 95:6). In doing so, we minister to the Lord (Ezek 44:15 & 16, 1st Peter 2:9). As we worship, we draw near to God, He draws near to us (Heb 10:19-25; Jas. 4:8) and we, consequently, respond to His presence (Luke 19:35-40).

Our worship consists primarily of personal interaction with God and, secondarily, of service to Him. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to Him while Martha was busy with the chores. The Lord's own answer was that Mary chose what was better (Luke 10:38-42). It is our sincere desire to nurture this same value in the hearts of those called to worship here.

Our Vision

Whatever setting we may find ourselves in, be it at home before the Lord, in a small group setting or a celebrative meeting with many others, we look to the Lord for the following characteristics and experiences:

1. For our Worship: Times of unbroken communion with God (The sharing of our thoughts and emotions with Him); worship identifiable by an obvious interchange of love between God and His people; the presence of God evident and tangible in healing and deliverance.
2. For the Worshipers: A people who are eager to come into God's presence, hungry for communion with Him; reaching out to God with joyful abandon; submissive to each of His overtures; all in one accord with the Holy Spirit and with each other.

Our Purpose

Our purpose in this ministry is to facilitate the practice of unbroken communion with God, which is the essence of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice. We believe that God created us to live in constant fellowship with Him or unbroken communion. The fall of man brought about eternal separation from God, which the Father remedied through the sacrifice of His darling Son, Jesus, who died for our sins and for our salvation. Through Him we obtain eternal life and direct access to God. We believe that worship is a primary means for us to participate in unbroken communion with God.

Our Philosophy Of Worship

This section has been adapted from "Building a Worship Philosophy" by John Wimber, as appears in the Worship Resource Center's training manual. Copyright 1987 Worship Resource Center/Vineyard Ministries International. A philosophy of worship or a "worship worldview" is concerned with the way we approach worship as a local church and as worship ministers in this church. Our philosophy includes both a thorough analysis of, and an explicit statement of, our underlying presuppositions. The elements of our worship philosophy include: Values, Priorities, Practices, Programs and Biblical Expressions of Worship, which are explained below.

I. VALUES

1. Values are "unseen", but they are extremely influential.
 - a. Values are like the foundations beneath a building. The foundation defines the location and the limits of the building above. The deeper the foundation, the higher the building can rise.
 - b. Values affect what we think and what we do. Our values are an intrinsic part of us, even though we seldom think about them in a conscious fashion. They determine the ideas, principles and concepts a person or group can accept, assimilate, remember and transmit. They are fallible and must constantly be revised and reviewed in light of Scripture.

2. The following are values which we hold at Vineyard Santa Rosa and which we seek to instill in the people we minister to.
 - a. Worship is given only to God and only for His glory. (Deut 5:6 & 7; Rom 1:20-23)
 - b. We are intimate and self-disclosing with God. (Isaiah 49:15 & 16)
 - c. We do not worship for "effect" or to manipulate God. (1 Kings 18:26)
 - d. We worship in honesty and integrity. (John 4:23 & 24; Eph 4:14-15 & 25)
 - e. Emotion during worship is simply our natural response to interaction with the living God. (Luke 19:36 - 40; Rev 1:17)
 - f. We welcome the ministry of the Holy Spirit in whatever way He chooses to work among us. (1 Thess. 5:19)

II. PRIORITIES

1. Priorities can be seen!
 - a. Priorities are seen by what is done. Priorities grow out of values and can be compared to the columns or posts that sit on the foundations of a building. They rise out of the foundation and hold the building together.
 - b. Priorities are established in order to give visible form to our values. Priorities demonstrate how we spend our time, energy and money.
2. The following priorities influence the practice of worship at our church.
 - a. Our worship is TO God, before it is "about" Him. (Rev. 5:9 & 10)
 - b. Worship is communication between both us and God. (John 4:23 & 24)
 - c. Worship is to be our lifestyle - individually and corporately. (Col 3:15 & 16; Psalm 95)
 - d. We set aside time specifically to worship.
 - e. We invest time, energy and money in worship. We provide for training and equipment, continually striving to grow and improve in all aspects in order to bring quality to our worship.
 - f. We provide instruction and care in worship to help others be more effective in ministering to God and to experience intimacy with God.
 - g. We are free to grow and change in our worship as God brings growth and change to us. As we do, we are careful to maintain consistency between our values and our priorities when change is initiated.

III. PRACTICES

1. Practices are sometimes seen and sometimes unseen. They hang upon our priorities.
 - a. Practices communicate values and priorities even though they may never be articulated verbally. We rigorously try to ensure that our practices communicate our values and priorities.
2. Following are our practices here at the Vineyard.
 - a. We engage in practices which are Biblically sanctioned, either implicitly or explicitly. (Psalm 100:4)
 - b. We worship at each of our gatherings. (Eph 5:19)
 - c. We encourage an uninterrupted flow of worship.
 - d. We seek to expand and grow in our practices as God gives growth. We seek new songs, new modes of expression and new experiences with God.
 - e. We encourage the whole person to enter into worship by use of body, soul and spirit.
 - f. We are free to express worship through all Biblical means: intimate adoration, thanksgiving, praise, extolling, exalting, rejoicing, Biblical meditation, service, etc.

IV. PROGRAMS

1. Programs are like the various rooms inside a building. They allow the values, priorities and practices to be expressed in various ways.
2. The following programs are part of the life of Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Santa Rosa.
 - a. Seminars and conferences.
 - b. Celebrations.
 - c. Congregational gatherings (i.e. Sunday Morning Service.)
 - d. Kinship meetings and other small group gatherings.
 - e. Personal and private worship. Our personal worship times should be equally as important as prayer and Bible reading.

V. BIBLICAL EXPRESSIONS OF WORSHIP

Included in our worship philosophy are the following forms of expression found in Scripture. This is not intended to be limiting or exhaustive in any way. Suggestions for addition to this list will be greatly appreciated.

1. Singing to Him. (Col 3:16; Psalm 149:1; 2 Chron 29:27)
2. Singing new songs. (Psalm 144:9) The word "new" in aramaic is "Hadas" which means fresh or unused.
3. Singing or speaking with your spirit. (1 Cor 14:14-17) Refers specifically to 'tongues'.
4. Speaking about Him. (Psalm 145:6-12) Refers to praises with the sense of "bubbling over with joy."

5. Playing musical instruments. (Psalm 150:1-6; Psalm 149:3; Psalm 144:9; 2 Chron 5:11-14 & 29:25-30) These instruments include winds, reeds, strings, brass and percussion.
6. Shouting joyfully to Him. (Psalm 47:1; Ezra 3:10 & 11) Praising God LOUDLY for His triumphs.
7. Weeping. (Ezra 3:12 & 13) Response of intimacy, joy, awe in God's presence, etc.
8. Lifting up our hands. (Neh 8:6) An outward expression of our hearts. Shows dependence, gratitude or surrender.
9. Bowing low with our faces to the ground. (Neh 8:6; Psalm 95:6 & 7) Demonstrating reverence & respect.
10. Kneeling. (Psalm 95:6) Shows humility, meekness and submission. It literally means "to bless" God.
11. Lying Prostrate. (Rev 1:10-17) Total awe, fear, reverence, humility or adoration.
12. Standing in His presence. (Deut 10:8) Acknowledgement of reverence and service to royalty.
13. Clapping our hands. (Psalm 47:1) "The Father's heartbeat". Release of joy & thanks. Also a powerful tool against the enemy's strongholds, many times combined with shouting, praise & singing.
14. Meditating. (Psalm 77:12; Philip 4:8) Pondering the attributes of God in our hearts.
15. Dancing. (1 Chron 15:29; Psalm 149:3 & 150:4; 2 Sam. 6:14-16; Exod 15:20) Celebrates God's victory and is a full expression of joy or rejoicing. Dancing also expresses intimacy with the Lord. (An example would be "slow dancing".)

Musician Development And Release

It is our desire to facilitate the development and release of musicians for service in our worship ministry and to do so from within our local church body. To this end, we have developed a process by which musicians are trained and released to become "minstrels" or worship ministers in our church. The components of this process are:

- Regular participation in a small group. (When small groups are in process.)
- Musical Training. (When training sessions are in process.)
- Apprenticeship.
- Fulfillment of Handbook Requirements.
- Service.

Following is a brief explanation of each of these components. Please refer to the flow charts at the end of this section as you read.

I. Regular Participation in a Small Group

All who wish to be involved in the worship ministry must be an integral part of the life of this church. Small Groups are the primary means for involvement and allow an individual's character to be proven as well as his or her worship skills to be developed.

II. Musical Training (Not applicable if meetings on sabbatical.)

For those musicians who are beginners or intermediates, we seasonally maintain a weekly meeting called "Musicians In Training" (MIT). The primary purpose of this meeting is to provide a place for participants to develop and enhance their individual skills with their chosen instruments on a regular basis. Areas of focus for this program include:

- Basic Music Theory.
- Rhythmic Skills.
- Playing with other Musicians.
- Memorization of Worship Songs.

Participants of this program are expected to practice regularly at home. We cannot overemphasize the importance of regular personal practice for those who wish to truly "play skillfully".

III. Apprenticeship

Once a musician has achieved an appropriate skill level both musically and as a worshiper, he or she may begin an apprenticeship with an experienced worship leader in a small group or as a member of a worship team. This applies to experienced musicians also. During this phase the "apprentice" will be given various levels of responsibility as well as systematic and specific goals designed to bring competency as a worship minister. Also during this phase the "apprentice" is given the opportunity to "learn by doing". Upon entering into apprenticeship, a probationary period begins in which the person's calling can be proven and affirmed.

IV. Fulfillment of Handbook Requirements

As an apprentice is becoming competent and his or her calling is affirmed, the prequalifications for involvement in the worship ministry on a permanent or long term basis can be met. Please refer to the appropriate section of this handbook for these requirements.

V. Service

A musician can enter into service as a worship minister after he or she has met all of the requirements listed in the worship ministry handbook. A twelve month service commitment is expected of all individuals desiring to participate. If you wish to lead worship as part of our worship team in celebration or congregational settings, you must first lead worship in a small group meeting successfully for a period of six to twelve months. (Care Groups, special meetings, retreats, etc.)

Worship Team Ministry Pre-Qualification

In calling for the following pre-qualifications and commitments for participation in the worship ministry of our church, it is our intention that there be a calling, an anointing and a Godly desire evident in the participant. It is not our desire to make it difficult for "difficulty's sake", but rather to ensure and encourage proper attitudes, teachable spirits, Godly character and the full use of God's gifts and callings in each team member, to the best of our ability.

PRE-QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Be a "True Worshipper." (John 4:23 & 24)
2. Evident ability to play your instrument skillfully. Willingness to be auditioned by the Worship Team.
3. Demonstrate a willingness to hold this ministry with an "open hand", leaving up to the Lord and the leadership all questions regarding the scope of your involvement.
4. Be a faithful participant in the life of this church as evidenced by regular attendance (a minimum of six months) at Small Group Meetings, (if applicable) and Sunday services. Demonstrate commitment to this local body by becoming involved in growing, healthy relationships with other people who are doing the same. Invest time, energy and money (regular tithes) as evidence of your call to this body.
5. Be recommended to the worship ministry by two or more persons involved in leadership on a pastoral level. (i.e. Small Group Leader, etc.)
6. Show a willingness to work within the expectations of the worship ministry pastor, as indicated in this handbook.
7. Indicate your willingness to support the pastor's vision, even if it requires you to lay yours aside.
8. Indicate your commitment to the vision, purpose and goal of this worship ministry.
9. Indicate your willingness to commit to the Worship Ministry Job Requirements included in this handbook.
10. If you are married, you must have the support of your spouse for involvement in the worship ministry.
11. If needed, indicate your willingness to pursue further education in music including Instrument, Voice or Theory.
12. Answer the Prospective Worship Team Member's Questionnaire included in this handbook.
13. Read "Let Us Praise" by Judson Cornwall.

Worship Team Job Requirements

In order to properly nurture and sustain the kind of worship we desire and to fulfill the biblical mandates regarding worship and work (worship in spirit and in truth; play skillfully; work as unto the Lord) we require all members of this ministry to commit themselves to the following requirements:

1. Spend time alone worshipping God regularly.
2. Practice your musical skills a regularly.
3. A willingness to be available to serve in any aspect of the worship ministry when called upon.
4. If you are in the band, attend team practice faithfully. The times and conditions are:
 - a. Friday night practice, 7:30 pm to 10:00 pm.
 - b. Sunday morning warm-up, 8:30 am to 9:45 am.
 - c. Sunday morning service, 10:00 am.
 - d. Special events which are relevant to your participation, on an "as they occur" basis. (Workshops, special services, etc.)
 - e. Extra practices for specialization. (i.e. Vocalists.)
 - f. Commitment to punctuality.
 - g. Commitment to practicing well.
 - h. Willingness to be corrected or criticized.
5. Memorization. All music used in group worship sessions whether a small group or a Sunday service must be committed to memory.
 - a. Lyrics
 - b. Chords & Notes (Music)
 - c. Arrangements and Rhythms.
6. Musical Skills.
 - a. Able to discern "in tune" vs "out of tune".
 - b. Trained ear. Able to play proper notes, chords, etc.
 - c. Familiarity with instrument. Play well and smoothly within your current level.
 - d. Rhythmically correct. Able to understand a rhythmic code or cell in a given song. Able to maintain rhythm with others.
7. Subscribe to Vineyard Ministries' Worship Resource Center for tapes and songbooks during your involvement with the team.

Songwriting

This section has been adapted from a workshop entitled "Songwriting", written by Brian Doerksen. Copyright 1992-Langley Vineyard; Used with Permission.

I. Introduction

If you are a functional member of this local body, have a good musical sense, desire to serve the body by giving expression to our worship and you are an experienced worshiper of God, THEN, your ministry here may include songwriting. Writing worship songs is a task that many Christians never consider attempting. It is a sacred and demanding task and we encourage any who have a clear call to write worship songs - to do so faithfully and skillfully. Some pointers in the process of songwriting are :

- Your desire to write worship songs must be overshadowed by your desire to know the Lord.
- Songwriting flows from the cultivation of your own personal worship time.
- Your focus must be an honest expression of your heart to God first and foremost.
- Treasure the songs you've written like an love-letter you've written to the Lord, to be shared with Him in your private times of worship. If He forces them out for public sharing, be obedient. Be careful not to cast your pearls carelessly.
- Songwriting is time consuming, frustrating at times, and hard work. Don't be easily discouraged.

Following are some guidelines which will help you develop your skills and discernment as a songwriter.

II. Songwriting

1. Developing Songvision.

- a. What are you trying to say? Reduce the essence of what you are trying to say and do to a phrase or a "nutshell" idea as a focus. Your music must support, serve and enhance your songvision.
- b. What is the musical atmosphere you desire? The musical style should be the best to support your lyrics and songvision. Pick a target and work with it.

2. Writing Lyrics.

- a. Concept. A strong lyrical concept is needed prior to writing the music. Again, the music should serve the message or songvision.
- b. Lyric Sources.
 - Scripture. Does a particular passage minister to you?
 - Experience and desire in your own relationship with God. Honesty is a primary ingredient in this process. Anything you write will "sound like you". Don't fight the way God has made you. You are an individual expression of His.
 - Intercessory prayers.
 - Prophetic Words. Often times prophecies you've heard will carry an important message that goes right to your heart.
 - Teachings.
 - Divine Inspiration. God will sometimes grant a vision, a dream or a visitation that inspires a songvision.
- c. Practical Pointers.
 - Simple enough for people to remember and sing. The simpler songs endure the longest.
 - A lyric is not a poem. Every word of the song should sing. Some words may rhyme but they don't sing. Use a thesaurus.
 - Good theology. Submit your songs to people that will check them for sound doctrine.
 - Write your title. Think carefully about this as its the thing people will remember. It should represent the songvision. Its OK to re-write your title.
- d. Rhyme.
 - Full rhyme or perfect rhyme. (Not necessary in order for the song to be musically correct.) Two or more words are said to rhyme when each contains the same final accented vowel and consonant sounds and a different consonant preceding that vowel. The word that sounds first is termed the rhyme agent; and the second of the pair, the rhyme mate. (i.e., shoe/true; fire/desire)
 - Half rhyme. (False rhyme or assonance.) It's OK to use half rhyme or vowel rhyme. An example of this is "Days and Grace". Its not a perfect rhyme but it will work musically because of the vowels.
 - Rhyme scheme. A lyric, like a poem has an overall end-rhyme pattern called a rhyme scheme. Its important to stay within your rhyme scheme.
 - Watch for overuse of rhyme.
 - Non-rhyming lyrics have been used successfully without impairing the song.
- e. Pointers from the Psalms Parallelism in thought.
 - "Synonymous parallelism" - using different lyrics to communicate the same thought. Remember your songvision.
 - "Antithetical parallelism" - balancing contrasted thoughts within the same song against each other to communicate your songvision. See Psalms 91: 5 & 6 or 37: 21 & 22.

- f. Summary
 - Keep it short. Make it your goal to say it in as few words as possible. Delete everything that doesn't fit your songvision.
 - Use honest words in favor of cliches.
 - Re-write your song many times. Evaluate each lyric and each note.
3. Writing the Melody
 - a. Establish the tempo, then the rhythm of the lyrical phrases.
 - b. Work on good prosody. (The marriage of words and music.) A key word should be emphasized by the music.
 - c. Do the whistle test. Is the melody simple enough to whistle?
 - d. Let the melody flow naturally out of your personality.

III. Practical advice for the worship song writer

1. Rewriting! Rewrite your song often. This will introduce excellence into your work.
2. If you notice a certain song missing, pray for it. Pray as well for other songwriters to receive songs from the Lord.
3. Be a good steward of the "talent" God has given you. Take your call seriously and do not bury your "talent" due to insecurity.

IV. What do you do with a completed song

1. You obey God! If He wants to share your secret song, let Him.
2. Wait for the right time to share them in your small group meeting or with the worship pastor. Do not be reluctant to share and do not be pushy either.
3. If there is a positive effect or response in your small group, share it at another small gathering.
4. If you find continued fruitfulness in the sharing of a song, share it with others who may wish to use it sometime. (Still on a small scale.)
5. If you receive ongoing encouragement about the song and you find that other people besides yourself (i.e. other worship leaders) are singing and using the song, then perhaps you'll want to submit it to a larger distributor of worship music. (Such as Mercy Music.)

V. Trusting God for the effect and distribution of a song

1. The best songs will find their way into widespread distribution without much effort from the composer.
2. Personal "connections" are controlled by God. He will decide the sphere of influence your songs will have.
3. Pray for, encourage and bless those who are visible.

Prospective Worship Team Member's Questionnaire

If you have a desire to participate in the worship ministry at Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Santa Rosa, either at the small group level or as a member of our worship band, please answer the following questions and return the answers to the worship pastor. If you would like to meet with the worship pastor to discuss this handbook or these questions, please do not hesitate to make an appointment.

1. Do you believe you have been called to participate in the worship ministry at this church? Explain.
2. Why are you interested in involvement on the worship team?
3. How would you rate the importance of the worship ministry in the church today?
4. How long have you been a Christian?
5. What "job" are you looking for?
6. What kind of music do you listen to?
7. What is the most important quality a worship team member should have?
8. How old are you?
9. What is your educational background relative to music?
10. If you play an instrument, how long have you been playing?
11. Who is the most important member of a worship team?
12. After reading the Worship Ministry Handbook, do you have any questions, concerns or comments?
13. How would you define worship?
14. Why is worship important to you?
15. Who is your pastor?
16. Explain the difference between a "visible" ministry and prominence in God's eyes.
17. What do you consider to be the greatest Christian virtue?
18. Have you met the pre-qualifications listed in this handbook?
19. Will you agree to the Worship Ministry Job Requirements section of this handbook?
20. If you were a worship team leader, what would you require of prospective new members for team involvement?
21. What makes a "public ministry or service" different from ministries or services that the public does not see?
22. Are you a team player?
23. What is the purpose and function of a worship team in the church today?