

Ten Things Every Congregation Want Their Worship Leader To Know

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In a time when “worship” is the number one genre of music, when worship CD’s sell by the millions and worship conferences, seminars, books and articles abound, we have to remember the focus of a worship leader – to help lead the congregation in connection with the living God. Whether you are serving twenty people in a house church or four thousand in an auditorium, we must set aside our own needs, agenda and desires and help the congregation, that God has entrusted to us, connect with Him. The thoughts below aren’t scientific data, but rather a reminder of what the congregation wants us to know.

Your congregation says...

1. **“Don’t try to be Chris Tomlin, David Crowder, Paul Baloche or Darlene Zschech. God already has those folks.”** We need you to be uniquely who God created you to be. Be unique to our church and to our community.
2. **“Loud doesn’t necessarily equal energy or youthfulness – we want it to be energetic – not piercing.”** It’s up to the worship leader to make sure the sound is where it needs to be with the blend that it needs to have. Because, the worship leader is up front and often doesn’t hear the “sound,” it takes time to build the right team to make it work well. Sound engineers and worship leaders need to work together to make sure that stage volume, individual instrument volume, monitors and house mixes all work together to make it great for the congregation. Additional factors that make good sound for worship services a long process often include a limited budget and lack of knowledge about the type of equipment needed. These factors take time and planning - making sure that the stuff you buy now, even if it’s small, is quality. Build as you go. If you have the luxury of starting from scratch, don’t skimp on sound, it’s crucial.
3. **“Variety is good.”** Different styles of songs, different instrumentation from time to time, or even a different form of worship breathes new life into the congregation. Don’t get in a rut (even through they may think they like it).
4. **“From time to time, we would like to hear our own voices.”** One of the exciting things about accompaniment driven worship is that the people voices carry the melody. The congregation loves it when, at the right times, the vocalists for the worship team step back and the instruments die down to allow for the voices of the congregation to carry the song for worship.
5. **“We want to have an opportunity and framework to meaningfully participate in worship leadership.”** As worship leaders we need to find ways to help people participate on many different levels. Time constraints make people’s involvement in worship participation tough, but there are ways to help assist people in taking part. Give people one shot jobs – it’s much easier to be asked to “read scripture on December 5” rather than, can you read scripture once a month. It’s also much easier to be asked for specific things such as, “could you sew skirting for the stage?” even if the job is large, as long as it’s specific, it’s easier to comprehend and commit to. Pull people in who have gifts in areas – technically, photography, decorating, musically, and make it personal. An ad in the bulletin that says, “we need help with worship components” will only marginally work. When you connect with a person by phone or even email, the chances of them connecting will be much greater.

6. **“Relax. Just because it’s Sunday morning and we are meeting here in the sanctuary for worship – doesn’t mean your personality has to change – be yourself and enjoy the time.”** Speak the same way on the stage and off, use the same tone of voice when you are up in front instead of changing for prayers, etc. Prepare and plan, but then enjoy it. As a worship ministry team member in the congregation, we have day in and day out to live in community and grow in discipleship. Take your time and enjoy the people in your congregation. If you have the opportunity, get to know the folks in your congregation in meaningful ways – lunch, etc. Be sure to be seen out and about before and after church worship.
7. **“Don’t let the look on my face determine your level of energy and excitement.”** There are so many factors that people bring with them to church. And they are counting on you, as a leader, to help them lay those things, good and bad, at Jesus feet as they give their lives in worship.
8. **“The unrehearsed word is probably more important than the rehearsed word.”** More than the words you say and sing from the stage, people’s lives will be impacted by how you act when you are not on stage. Your actions and attitudes in dealing with people, caring for those in your family, and supporting your leaders in the church will speak volumes
9. **“Is it ok to not always be ‘happy’?”** It’s ok to lament – we don’t always feel happy and upbeat, but we still want to worship him and follow Him. Help the congregation to remain faithful even as we are mourning with our brothers or sisters during a trial or struggle.
10. **“Help me grow in my gifts and abilities and discipleship.”** The worship team is asking the leader to help them grow in their ministries. People are motivated by feeling like things are moving up. Remind them of where they have been and where they are going. Remind them of how far they have come. Give them tools for growing in their musical ability. Take them to experience other events, church services, etc. Encourage them through notes, emails and creative appreciation efforts. Pass along articles that you might find that would be helpful, though, don’t over do it – only pick the out the best. Have a time of devotion and prayer during rehearsals or whenever you can. Insist on times for them to be in the worship service as a congregation member every once in a while... give them a break from leading and serving each week.