

The Core Values for our Worship Arts Ministry

We believe that Corporate Worship is immeasurably enriched by:

Savoring the Beauty of God!

Corporate worship must cultivate a vivid awareness of the beauty, majesty, mystery, and holiness of the Triune God (Ps. 27:4). It must fire our passion for who God is and what God has done! This can only be accomplished through a Trinitarian framework. True corporate worship is God-exalting (1 Chr. 16:29; Ps. 95:6-7), Christ-centered (John 4:23-24; Rev. 5:6-14), and Spirit-enabled (Phil. 3:3).

Engaging with Scripture

The Bible is the source of our knowledge of God and of the world's redemption in Christ. Thus, corporate worship must expound upon the biblical theology of the weekly sermon text. Christian services must integrate God's truth, not fragment it. Worship should include prominent readings of Scripture, and engage worshipers through intentional reading practices, art, and music (Col. 3:16). It should present and depict God's being, character, and actions in ways that are consistent with scriptural teaching. It should follow biblical commands about worship practices, and it should heed scriptural warnings about false and improper worship. In particular, Christian worship should be deeply connected to its ancient roots in the Psalms.

Edifying the Saints

New Covenant worship terminology prescribes *constant* "worship." So why does the NT community gather? To worship more!? The New Covenant community gathers corporately to provide for the mutual edification of the saints. "Edification is the best summary of what occurs in corporate singing, confession, public prayer, the ministry of the Word and so forth."ⁱ Therefore, our corporate worship services must focus on the mutual edification of the saints (1 Cor. 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26; Eph. 4:11-16; 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Balancing Our Approach to Culture

Corporate worship should be historically informed by the traditions of the church and yet culturally sensitive to diverse aesthetic preferences of our congregation and community. We must pastorally engage our congregation to broaden and deepen their musical tastes by maintaining openness to what is new, and feeding them on the rich traditions of the church. Corporate worship should be: transcultural (some elements of worship are beyond culture), contextual (worship reflects the culture in which it is offered), cross-cultural (worship breaks barriers of culture through worship), and counter-cultural (worship resists the idolatries of its cultural context). See Rom. 12:1-2; Matt. 5:13; Rev. 5:9)

Embracing all Worshipers in our Intergenerational Community

Corporate worship is not just what ministers, musicians, and other worship leaders “do” on stage. It is what all worshipers “do”—through the work of the Spirit in worship. In vital corporate worship, all worshipers are engaged and involved in the actions, words, and meaning of worship. Further, God’s covenant promises endure “from generation to generation.” Corporate worship intentionally reflects the intergenerational community. All people of all ages must be welcomed as full participants in worship (Ps. 148:12-13). Their intergenerational participation enriches one another and breaks down age barriers.

Unleashing the Creativity of the Saints

Corporate worship must engage the whole person: body, mind, will, and emotions. Worship and praise may move through a great variety of emotions, but should never be trite or glib. The church can engage the whole person by unleashing the creative capacity of God’s people (Ex. 25:30-35). Christians have the freedom to incorporate all forms of music, poetry, art, drama, choral readings, monologues, banners, calligraphy, photography, dance, testimonies, video stories, Radio Theater, and traditional liturgical elements—whatever will expound upon the truth of God’s Word.

Actively and Regularly Participating in the Ordinances

Christ has instituted two ordinances to be observed by the church in this present age: water baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). We become spiritually impoverished when we fail to actively participate in these Christian rites. While water baptism and the Lord’s Supper are not the means of salvation, these rites are spiritually nurturing in that they tangibly remind us of the facts upon which our salvation is based.

Collaborating Together in the Planning Process

Worship planning must not be the sole domain of the pastor, but a collaborative expression of the laity’s grasp of God’s beauty and their unique cultural expression of it. Thus, worship planning must include a collaborative process for both the planning and evaluating the worship services.

Welcoming Strangers

A central feature of Christian worship is that it breaks down barriers to welcome all people, including strangers, persons with disabilities, those from other cultures or races, seekers and visiting Christians (Rom. 12:13).

ⁱ D. A. Carson, *Worship by the Book*, p. 23-25.