



# How to Lead Great Worship in a Small Church!

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How Do YOU Feel When You See Worship on TV?

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When you turn on the TV and see huge churches and audiences worshipping the Lord you can feel inspired, excited and, truth be known, just a little jealous, right?

Chances are you do not get to lead worship in front of thousands of people every week, with a huge band including a brass section, a massive choir or some of the world's finest backing singers, right? You get to lead worship maybe once a month, in front of a small group of people you know intimately, and maybe you get a single piano, or perhaps a guitar.

I know that you get inspired by witnessing the spectacle of in these huge churches, but the fact is that the vast majority of worship leaders do not have the opportunity to worship in the way that you see on television. And when they lead worship, the vast majority of worship teams do not sound anything like the latest praise and worship CD!

This report is designed specifically with the local worship leader in a local church in mind. Let's face it: across the world there are very few huge churches but will allow you to lead. So for all you people starting out, and for those of you serving faithfully and small, local churches, this report is for you.

It has been my privilege to lead worship in front of a variety of audiences across the world. Every month I get to travel with Australia's leading evangelist and seeing all lead worship to huge audiences somewhere in the world, most often in Asia or Africa. But at the same time, I am a worship leader in my local church here in Australia, and my church is not the largest church in the area. In fact, my local church has only between 70 and 100 people attending, yet I love to lead worship with my friends in my local church equally as much as I love to lead worship in front of tens of thousands of people in other countries.

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What many successful and high profile widget leaders do not understand is that, when you are at which a leader in a small local church, you do not have the resources and personnel available in the same way as you would in a mega-church.

The numbers are smaller. The equipment is poorer. The musicians are less accomplished. The singers are more amateurish. And there are less of them available! This is what it is like in a small church when you are the work of leader, and you face the same dilemma as week after week as you try and mold your worship team into an effective unit, and as you try and lead your congregation into a deeper presence of the Lord in worship.

Having been a worship leader in both small and large churches, I have designed this report to specifically geared ideas and advice to those of you serving in the small church situation.

I promise you it will provide simple, practical and effective advice that you can start to use this Sunday, and for the rest of your life as your church grows.

Here are some of the difficulties you face when leading worship in a small church;

- 1. Poor musicians and singers.*
- 2. Fewer instruments and good voices than you need to do the job properly.*
- 3. Small, inflexible PAs, microphones and other equipment.*
- 4. Discouragement; it is harder to engage a smaller audience than it is a large audience.*

Let's look a little more closely at each of these areas:

### 1. Poor musicians and singers.

In small church as it is very common to have poor and inexperienced musicians and singers. Believe me, over 20 years of worship leading I had seen the lot. Drummers who cannot keep time, singers who cannot stay in key and guitarists or pianists who cannot play anything other than rudimentary chords. If you are facing any or all of these, how in the world can you lead your church congregation in worship effectively?

Here are a few suggestions that I have found helpful in dealing with inexperienced or poor musicians.

#### **1. Make sure you choose simple and easily playable songs.**

Many of the modern worship songs sound great but contain complex chord progressions and notes. However, if you have a lesser musicians you are wise to steer away from these songs and do songs which are easier to play.

#### **2. Make sure you instruct your musicians to play something that is within their grasp.**

Even if it means that your guitarist is playing one confirmed at the start of the bar, all your drummer is playing one simple basic beat, it is better to do this than to have them make mistakes, thereby embarrassing themselves and the entire team. Just because they played it on the Hillsong CD, doesn't mean that your guy can play it like that! The essence is, keep it simple!

#### **3. If you're singers are having trouble keeping on key, instruct the sound man to turn down those who are singing flat.**

Try to pick out one senior who is able to sing and hold the notes and make sure that they can be heard, and make sure that you can blend in with them. If you have a number who want to sing but cannot, group them together into a singing group, and put your best singers at the front with a mic each.

### 2. Fewer instruments and good voices than you need to do the job properly.

In a small church it is a fact of life that you will very often have less personnel than you need to do a job effectively. When it comes to the worship team, this will most often mean that you are missing certain instruments which, in a small team, will greatly affect the outcome.

The first thing you need to do when facing the dilemma of having too few instruments is to modify your attitude. That's right, your attitude! You need to stop looking at the situation as a negative and start to see the absence of certain instruments has a tremendous opportunity to change the feel of the music and the level of worship.

Recently I was in our church, but the drummer had just resigned, without any obvious replacement. This meant that there was no one capable of playing the drums during worship. In fact, all we had for instruments was a guitar and piano, but fortunately we had two or three good singers. I gathered the worship team around and excitedly said to them, "The absence of the drums and bass provides us with a tremendous opportunity to change the feel of the worship we deliver in church this morning."

#### **Here's what I did:**

The first thing I did was to dispense with any up-tempo fast songs of all! Without drum these were always bound to sound average. Instead, we selected a series of worship songs which were quiet which built to a crescendo. We included hymn and made sure that every song prominently featured the vocals. We were able to produce three and four part harmonies with very little music behind them.

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Just before the worship began, we gathered some stools to sit on and I began to strum my guitar. I instructed the audience to close their eyes, focus on Jesus and put away the cares and troubles of the week. Then we slowly and beautifully sang "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus," followed by a number of quiet and beautiful love songs to Him.

The Holy Spirit began to move powerfully and gently among the congregation. The senior pastor said to me afterwards that it was probably the best worship time he had had in the church all year. The Lord had faithfully come through for us and for the church, turning the absence of a drummer and bass player into a positive change in music style.

You can leave a powerful worship in a small church with very few musicians and singers. Ask God for a creative way to make your music, albeit simpler, a beautiful and powerful worship experience.

### 3. Small, Inflexible PAs, Microphones and Other Equipment.

In a small church is usually the case that you have a small sound system, and Paul microphones and other equipment. How do you deal with this situation? Once again, the most important thing is to approach the situation with the right attitude, asking the Lord for a creative way to turn what seems to be a negative into a positive and powerful worship experience.

The easiest thing to do, especially in a very small church, is to dispense with the sound system altogether and lead worship acoustically, with just a guitar piano. This can also free you to walk up and down the aisles encouraging your congregation to join you, and dispenses with Pearl of the difficulties that bad sound equipment can bring.

The other suggestion I have if your sound equipment is bad is to run the PA at a lower level, because any problems you have will be exacerbated by running the sound system louder. If you have a drummer, try padding down his drums using pillows or taking rolled up tissues to the drums, and taping up the cymbals. Yes, this will make the drums sound worse, but will also make them sound much softer. Asking the drummer to use hot rods or brushes will also dampen the sound of drum makes, so you can turn the overall sound level down.

Let's face it, worship leaders, you can deal with poor musicians, bad singers, too few band members and terrible sound systems. The next area I wanted to discuss is probably the most important:

### 1. Discouragement;

It is harder to engage a smaller audience than it is a large audience.

When you are worship leading in a small church, you can see all the members of the congregation as individuals. As you lead you can see the expression on their faces, whether their hands raised or in their pockets, and in many cases you can hear whether they are singing loudly or not singing at all.

This is in complete contrast to worship leading with a large audience. In fact worship leading inside huge stadiums is an almost surreal experience. With the lights in your face, and a tailback of the sound system blaring in your ears, you sometimes feel that you are the only ones singing and playing and that there was no audience at all. Most often you can't see them and you certainly cannot hear them.

This means that leading worship in front of a small audience, especially those in your local church whom you know as friends, is a more difficult thing to do. It is almost like your emotions are at the complete mercy of your audience. When they smile and worship and raise their hands, you feel that they are with you and that the worship experience is good. When they are hardly singing, have their hands in their pockets and a scowl on their face, you can be assured that your worship leading has been badly received.

That's why, when you are the worship leader in a small church, it is very easy to become discouraged and to give up, or to just go through the motions reproducing the same worship experience week after week.

The only way to truly beat this discouragement is to spend time in the word, and to make sure that you keep real unity and love within your team, not a spirit of criticism. Also, continually communicate with your

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pastor to make sure that you are leading the worship in the way they believe it should go.

Another thing that you can do to minimise discouragement is to interact with worship leaders from other churches. The Internet is a brilliant means to do this, and worship leading blogs such as [how one can provide real encouragement when you're feeling down and discouraged](#).

If you read the right material, and are constantly open to learning new ideas and techniques, then this will minimise your discouragement, improve your worship leading and maximise your potential as a worship leader in your local church.

### Final Thoughts:

So in closing, I encourage you strongly to keep in touch with other worship leaders, to read worship blogs and to do the training that we have provided for you. It is low cost but highly effective and it can have an incredible influence on your ability as a worship leader, especially in a small church.

Although a small church congregation may make the worship leading more difficult, if you provide inspired, powerful and beautiful worship for your church, it is unlikely that your small local church will remain small for very long! That's right, instead of going in joining a big church only to sit in the audience, why not place your gifts and your dreams at your pastor's feet, get the right training, and help your pastor to grow the church beyond your wildest dreams. It is possible, and your worship leading can play a pivotal role in the growth of your local church congregation.

For more information, training and help visit us at

<http://worshipleaderonline.com>