

A FUNDAMENTAL GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE WORSHIP

#1 The Great Connection

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I recently had a conversation about worship with my old friend Rense Miller whom many of you also know. The discussion centered, as usual, on how to sustain effective worship in the local church during changing times. Rense and I both realized that as we have gotten older, new, younger pastors and worship leaders have stepped in with fresh ideas and new music to fill the void created by us retirees. Along with that, however, old, important questions emerged as we spoke about how to retain the fundamentals of biblical worship in order to insure God's purposes for this precious activity. Without presenting ourselves as know-it-alls, we thought a few comments based experience might be helpful in the ever-continuing effort to develop effective worship among our people. We hope this short article will address one of those issues.

Probably the most important fundamental to effective worship involves the interpersonal connection between the pastor and the worship leader; hence the title of this article. Practically, the three main aspects involved in a worship service are the worship leader, the preacher, and the congregation. If the first two are successfully connected in preparing the entire worship service from beginning to end, consideration of the third can be included in the discussion.

Recently, for example, I was asked to fill the pulpit of a local church in my area. Two weeks before the day arrived, I received a request to provide my **sermon title**, an explanation of the **theme** of my message and **suggestions** for the worship leader about how I would like the flow of the service to go with music. I was happy to supply that information which led to a coordinated effort that successfully drew the congregation into a complete, participative experience. That, is a great connection.

Without a thorough connection between the worship leader and the preacher, one of the most important ingredients to a complete worship experience, **seamlessness**, will be difficult to achieve. Seamlessness, the smooth, uninterrupted, previously-prepared movement between songs and the different parts of the service, leads to a wonderful sense of fulfillment in those who have come to church to experience an encounter with God. It is irreplaceably something that is worth putting a lot of conscious effort into.

A second benefit of this great connection is creativity. As the worship leader and pastor grow together through frequent preparational discussions, new ideas about transitions, elder or deacon involvement, and stylistic variations in music can be implemented, taking congregational fulfillment to a new level.

So, here's to the great connection in your church. May God cause it to bring him greater glory and to all of you . . . greater good in your worship endeavor.