PHILOSOPHY OF AND VISION FOR WORSHIP

Everyone is a worshiper. We can either choose to worship the true God of the universe or something He created. We are born worshiping and we naturally spend our time and money on that to which we ascribe worth. Consciously and unconsciously, we worship what we value.

As Christians and as the Church, we understand that worship, simply put, is loving God and being loved by Him. He is the initiator, though. God loved us while we were still in open rebellion against Him (Romans 5:8). We often associate worship only with what takes place on a Sunday morning in a building dedicated to worship. Worship, though, should be a daily expression of our lives as we walk with God in every experience of life (Romans 12:1-2).

Worship is the appropriate response to God's self-revelation. Our triune God wants us to know Him and as He reveals Himself to us, we respond in praise, repentance, confession, resting in His presence, and commitment.

We want to help people first come to know how much they are loved by their Heavenly Father, then submit their lives to his control, and finally to live their whole lives as acts of worship. Corporate worship - coming together with other people for the purpose of worship is something God invites us to and expects us to make a part of our lives.

We have great bands with musicians who love to play good music, but who know it is not a performance, except in the sense that all our worship is an offering to our true audience -- God. Worship, for those in front of the congregation, is about giving back to God and leading others to do the same.

Music is a gift from God. We can't imagine a world without music. Music gives voice to our emotions, to our soul itself. Music is not worship – simply singing or listening to a song does not mean I am worshiping God. Music can help people express or even experience gratitude, adoration, joy, sorrow, hope, aspiration, and disappointment. Jesus said the Father is seeking those who worship "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). In worship, music properly utilized will be grounded in the truths of Scripture as it engages our hearts in response to our God who is making Himself known to us.

Music is only one element of corporate worship. The Word of God is central to our worship. Music used in worship should reflect and support the Word of God. It does not exist for itself. Music should be Word-centered, Christ-focused, passionate, honest, and done with "un-distracting excellence" – in other words, the music presentation is appreciated, but doesn't overwhelm the message of the song. Whenever possible, music selections should be thematically aligned with the teaching of the Word for that service.

To discuss music styles assures that the discussion becomes about personal preferences, but personal preferences should never guide our musical selections. The first question is, "Does this song accurately reflect the teachings of Scripture?" Next, we ask, is it "good music", regardless of its style? Music is but one aspect of corporate worship and it should enhance and direct our response to the Lord who is revealing Himself to us. We should use both well-written contemporary music and time-tested hymns. We believe people should sing and participate to God's Glory, regardless of the musical style being used.

Corporate worship experiences are commanded and essential in the lives of believers. They should equip and move people from worshiping together to worshiping God in our whole life. God is everywhere and we want to move people toward living each moment for Him, whether we're at a worship service or a ball game.

Our worship should be Biblically grounded, Christ-centered, God-glorifying, and congregation-edifying.

Ken Dalton
12.12.2018