

NEUE SPHERE

NEUE COMMUNITY

NEUE MISSION

NEUE ORTHODOXY

NEUE SOUL

NEUE MOVEMENT

NEUE PRAXIS



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The goal for worship leaders and church musicians should be that they become ministers through music. It isn't enough to be good musicians, or great performers. Your worship team needs to minister. Those who minister through music have some very distinguishing characteristics. They're passionate about what they're doing. They have a sense of calling. They're disciplined. They're full of integrity, and they clearly exhibit a servant heart toward God and others. What worship pastor wouldn't want a stage full of people who fit that description! Conveniently, every one of these qualities comes along quite naturally as a result of one all-important process called spiritual growth.

#### YOU'VE GOT ONE BIG RESPONSIBILITY

It's easy to get frustrated and impatient with members of our team when we don't see them growing and developing like we think they should. When they grumble and complain, when they're late for rehearsals and don't take their responsibilities seriously, when they seem to want the spotlight all to themselves—all these attitudes and actions are realities every seasoned worship pastor has had to deal with at some point. "What am I going to do with these people?" we say in exasperation. The



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answer is simple, or at least it starts out simple: We need to fervently and consistently pray for them. The good news is it's not up to us to change them. That's God's job. The powerful message of 2 Corinthians 3:18 is that we are being transformed, "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (TNIV). According to Hebrews 12:2, Jesus is both the author and the finisher of our faith. Our responsibility then, first and foremost, is to intercede for those in our worship ministries, asking our great God to grow them and transform them in His time and in His way.

### YOU FIRST

Beyond praying for them, we have some specific responsibilities as leaders to help out in the growth process. First off, we have to exemplify the qualities and characteristics we hope to see in those we lead. It sounds obvious of course, and if it weren't for the oft-used insult "hypocrite," I'd completely bypass it. But the truth is, what is easy to tell others to do is often the hardest to do ourselves. Are we enthusiastic as we lead from the stage? If not, then what right do we have to tell others to be? Do we show up with a smile and an upbeat attitude each week for rehearsals? Can others sense our passion for God and for those He loves? That kind of passion will contagiously "rub off" on your ministry team if they see it first in you.

Then there is discipline. How incredible would it be if our musicians practiced their music at home before they came to the rehearsals? How much more effective would it be for the singers to memorize the lyrics to the songs so they could focus on the congregation and the Lord? If we desire such disciplines in our praise teams, we must set the example of discipline before them.

Exemplified discipline is also needed with spiritual growth. I was talking with a music director whose choir had recently gone through my worship study. I asked him how his people responded to the study, and his reply was that they didn't "get into it" very much. Spurred on by curiosity as well as some concern, I asked him why. All he said

was that he didn't really know. Then, later in our conversation, he admitted something that cleared up the mystery for me. He said when he introduced the study to his choir, he explained how he wanted them to do it and why he thought they needed it. But then, he told them he just didn't "have time to do the study" himself, thus he wasn't going to participate in it. No wonder his people didn't "get into it" more. They didn't see their leader place priority on growing spiritually, so why should they?

Ask yourself if you're the person you'd like your ministry team to be. If the answer is no, then you need to focus on yourself first. There can be no "Do what I say not what I do" in effective leadership.

### EXAM TIME

The second step to help move your team toward maturity is to examine—to purposefully observe your team members, taking note of their progress both in their ministries and in their spiritual growth. Are they being effective? Are they being challenged under your leadership? Invest time with them and be friends with them outside of rehearsals and hectic church schedules. Perhaps go out to eat as casual groups, or invite your team over to your home. Be sure to make use of your quality time around them to discover their attitudes toward the rest of the group and toward their ministry involvement.

I recently spoke with a bass guitarist who was dissatisfied with the church he'd been playing in for years. "We never practice before we play," he told me. And as a result, he had finally decided to move to a different church where he'd be challenged and could play with more excellence. As we spoke, I couldn't help but wonder if his worship director had any idea he was so discontent.

Not only should we as leaders examine our group, we should also lead our group to examine themselves from time to time. One tremendous approach is to draw a simple "spider graph" on a white board. Starting from a central hub, draw five lines of equal length away from the hub. Place 10 points or marks equally spaced on each line. At the end of each line, write one of the following: passion, calling, discipline, integrity and servant heart.

Now, briefly explain each one to your group and ask them to agree together on a ranking of one to 10 for how they as a group are doing regarding each quality. Place a distinct marking on each line to represent your decision. After you've discussed and decided on a ranking for all five qualities, "connect the dots," so to speak. The result is a "spider web" that clearly signifies the areas in which you are strongest and the areas where you need to improve.

### URGE THEM ON

Thirdly, just as it's important to exemplify and to examine, it's equally vital to exhort and urge them toward maturity. As worship pastors and leaders, we need to do as Paul who wrote to the church at Thessalonica: "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and

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urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Exhorting or urging is for many of us probably the easiest part of the job. It's fun to encourage our team and remind them of the importance of their calling and role in the church. Even so, it's important to be diligent and intentional in this—encourage even more often than you think you should. Even the most secure musicians and technical assistants appreciate being told when they do a good job. Praise their efforts and progress in front of other team members. I send a weekly email to my group with updates and announcements. Once or twice a month, I highlight a member of our group, pointing out a commendable action or attitude of his or hers the previous Sunday.

Another way to urge your team forward is through teaching them. Carve out time during your regular weekly rehearsals to do a few minutes of teaching on worship and leadership, so you can include and impact the most people within your groups. Too often, we leaders get frustrated and impatient with the spiritual and biblical shallowness of our people, when, in fact, we're encouraging that shallowness because we don't invest time to teach them.

Urging people forward isn't always or only the fun stuff. At times it will include confrontation and rebuke. You may need to occasionally confront members of your group if their lack of commitment or their poor attitudes are affecting others in your group. I had to ask a guitarist to leave my praise team once because he refused to repent when we discovered he was living with his girlfriend. Confrontation is never easy or pleasant, but as shepherds we must protect the "flock" God has entrusted


to us. The key above all is to love them. "[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

### EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER

The fourth and final step that will help develop your team to be ministers through music is experience. Look for ways to build in success stories for your group. Celebrate when you have a powerful and well-executed worship set, for example. Feature individuals within your group to share Bible verses or faith-stories during the service when possible.

Consider turning the leadership reins over to someone else on your team for a song or two occasionally. Be sure to set them up for success by carefully preparing them, then showing them you trust their abilities and their walk with God. Also, help your group experience ministry off-stage by taking them on a mission trip or by investing a day to sing at an assisted living home or homeless shelter. Pray for and look for ways to minister to those both in your congregation and, of course, within your group.

One final thought: Sure, developing our worship teams to become ministers through music can seem like a slow and challenging process at times. But keep this in mind: Spiritual growth—both for your team and for you—is a journey you have the opportunity to be a part of. So, don't treat it like a dreaded responsibility, but rather as a joyful privilege you have to watch your team blossom in their understanding of true, biblical worship.

Determine to do all you can to help your group grow "... in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). 

**DWAYNE MOORE** has led and taught worship for more than 30 years, speaking in more than 1,000 churches and conferences. He is founder of Next Level Worship, and is a frequent contributor to Rick Warren's Ministry Podcast. He has also written numerous books and articles on worship.

## RESOURCES

Here are some books that can help you encourage your worship team to minister through music.

### BOOKS



+ *The Worshipping Artist*  
Rory Noland  
(Zondervan)

This guide offers practical advice on how to spiritually prepare for worship.



+ *Worship Matters*  
Bob Kauflin  
(Crossway Books)  
Kauflin discusses how to base worship in scriptural

practices rather than divisive trends—and the book isn't just for music leaders.



+ *Pure Praise: A Heart-Focused Bible Study on Worship*  
Dwayne Moore  
(Group Publishing)

This book turns attention toward the hearts of worship leaders and worshipers, and is an ideal resource for those asking, "How can I worship more authentically?"