

Guidelines for Leaders of Corporate Praise

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This document comes out of an observed need for understanding and clarification for those leading an assembly in corporate praise.

1. Recognize that there are different types or styles of music, each having a distinct place and function at different times within the assembly:
 - **Listening songs** – songs that express the feelings of the musician. The music often has its own rhythm. The words are meant to be heard and the music felt. These songs are for listening or entertainment. Save this for a time the congregation is not meant to sing.
 - **Soaking songs or music** – songs of music with gentle and soft flow and rhythm. Not intended to be sung. Save this for a time the congregation is not meant to sing.
 - **Prophetic songs** – songs whose words are important and need to be heard. The music often has its own irregular rhythm. These songs are not intended to be sung by others.
 - **Background songs or music** – songs or usually just instrumentals with their own rhythm. Mood music not for singing. Save this for a time when the congregation is not meant to sing.
 - **Singing songs** – songs with words of consistent rhyme and rhythm and music having a repetitious and regular meter that solicits involvement and especially singing before the Lord. Any deviation from the rhythm and melody will breed uncertainty, and the congregation will be hesitant to follow. Use this for those times the congregation is to be singing His praises.
2. Corporate praise is that event when, in unison and harmony, those assembled sing songs of praise or testimony to the God-head.
3. Corporate praise can lead into worship. Biblically, worship is the quiet, contemplative bowing to, and adoration of, the God-head. (Worship, שָׁחָה, *shachah*, means: to bow down).
4. Corporate praise should involve singing type songs. Avoid other song types during this time. The early hymns had this quality, as did the early charismatic and Vineyard type songs. In the last 5-7 years the listening songs, which proved more saleable on CDs have drifted into the assembly. Praise teams had tried to copy their entertaining and feeling style, while the congregation has been left standing silent—listening.

While often repetitious and tiresome to musicians, singing songs are vital in leading those assembled into an attitude of praise and toward worship. Test me in this and see how their involvement ‘lifts the roof’ from your building!

The musician’s role is a service role, a servant role, a song leader, not an entertainer. Your role is to encourage the assembly to vocalize their praises to God.

Times of corporate praise touch the heart and take us into God’s presence in ways that preaching and teaching cannot.

The corporate time of praise is a prime ingredient for revival and renewal. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in you and as he brings those assembled into the throne room.

Please give a copy of this to your worship leader.

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