

The Priorities of Worship Ministry

I. The Lesson

What would you say is the primary purpose of your existence? What would you say are the top five priorities of your life? How about the top five priorities of each day? These are important questions to ask and to answer. Successful people spend time examining and establishing their purpose and priorities and make decisions accordingly. **Prioritization reveals the negative or trivial things that take up space and time in our lives and drain us of energy and resources.**

Having priorities establishes behaviors and determines the way we invest our time, talent, and resources. As we establish priorities in worship ministry, we need to be clear on what is primary, secondary, and what falls way down the list.

For example, let's say you love to golf. Now you may be asking, "What does that have to do with worship ministry?" Actually, quite a bit. We all have hobbies, sports, and other activities that we enjoy and that bring us a level of relaxation, enjoyment, and perhaps sanity. So, it is not the activity (eg. golf) that is the issue, but how you prioritize it that will either produce life or death. If you neglect your spouse, miss church, or risk losing your job in order to spend more time on the course, you have taken something that may be beneficial and turned it into a hindrance.

Worship ministry requires accurate and consistent prioritization in order to keep our gifts, talents, and desires from becoming barriers instead of blessings. When we understand and minister with a clearly established list of priorities, it will release our gifts and abilities to be a blessing to the Lord and the body of Christ. (For more on personal priorities, refer to the lesson on "Personal Priorities of a Worship Minister.")

In this lesson, we want to establish the priorities of who we minister to and how that will affect the way we approach our function as worshipers. Our primary purpose in being involved in the worship team is to _____, not to perform, sing, play, mix, dance, or create. The following are the **five levels of ministry prioritization** that we have established for our teams and leaders.

1. Minister to _____.

Eze. 44:15-16 "But the priests, the Levites... shall come near Me **to minister to Me**; and they shall stand before Me... says the Lord God. They shall enter My sanctuary, **and they shall come near My table to minister to Me**, .

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If God is not the primary focus and purpose of our worship, then we have missed the whole point! As basic as this concept may appear, there are many worship teams and leaders that make decisions, choose songs, play instruments, and invest their time without considering these basic questions: “Does it please the Lord?” “Are these the songs that will touch the heart of God?” “What does the Holy Spirit want to do in this service?” “Is God enjoying our worship time?”

Let’s consistently remind ourselves and each other that, “This is all for Him. It’s not about my enjoyment, but it is about His. Worship is for the Creator, not the created.”

2. Minister to the _____ (the congregation).

A good way to view yourself as a “worship team member” is as a “worship-servant” for the congregation. Our job is to create a musical and spiritual atmosphere that will release them to worship God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength! This has many ramifications when we begin to place the needs of the people above our personal preferences and prioritize their worship experience above ours. So, for every worship service, the people of God become the second highest priority as we evaluate all the elements that are involved.

3. Serve (minister to) the _____ of the house!

1 Thess. 5:12-13 “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.”

1 Cor. 16:15-16 “...They have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it.”

This is an area of focus and prioritization that comes before our personal vision or preferences. This area could be debated as to whether it should be number two or three on the list. My observation as a former worship pastor (Dave speaking) – and now a senior pastor – is that if the worship team is ministering to the Lord and to the people of God, that I (as a senior pastor) am feeling served and honored in the process.

The practical applications of this principal involve issues like: musical style, length of the worship time, volume, dress code, visual impact of what is happening on stage, song selection, serving the vision or theme of the service, and considering the series or goal that the pastor is

preaching toward. A lack of submission to senior leadership or lack of desire to serve them through the worship ministry has created much division, stress, fighting, church splits, and made room for other demonic activity in the body of Christ.

4. Serve (minister to) _____.

As we stand on stage, in the sound booth, video room or wherever else, we must learn to prioritize the worship experience and preferences of those we are serving with, above our own. This requires sensitivity and the ability to pay attention to what is happening around us.

Rom. 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another”

When we honor and give preference to one another, we intentionally consider the opinion, gifts, talents, and desires of others as more valuable than our own. This is undoubtedly a true test of maturity and requires a heart of worship and humility. We must lead the way in showing deference and giving away the “spotlight,” the credit, the best opportunities, or the last word.

5. _____.

Yes, once we have prioritized the Lord, His people, our leaders, and those we serve with, we need to express ourselves, be free, and be blessed by the experience of serving the Lord with our gifts and talents! Our enjoyment and fulfillment needs to be on the list of priorities, because if we are not enjoying the worship times and the overall experience then we will be unable to sustain the other priorities. Besides, God wants us to have fun and be fulfilled while doing the very thing we were created for!

Psa. 16:11 “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

II. Discussion

1. How does “ministering to the Lord” as our highest priority and making sure that *He* enjoys what we do before anyone else affect our worship services?

2. How does prioritizing the congregation above our own desires and preferences affect the worship services?
3. How can we better serve the leadership of the house through the worship ministry? Are we submitted and serving with a good attitude in this area?
4. What do you do if serving leaders or the congregation is in conflict with your style, preference, or what you believe is the “best kind of worship?”
5. What are other practical ways of serving one another?
6. How can we lovingly remind each other about these priorities and ensure that they become a way of life for our team?

IV. Prayer Points

1. Pray for a real revelation that we are all “Ministers unto the Lord,” priests serving in the courts of our God.
2. Pray for a servant heart to be upon the worship team as it pertains to prioritizing the people and the leadership.
3. Pray for the ability to prefer each other in practical ways.
4. Pray that every worship service would exemplify God's receiving the glory and our enjoying what we do.