



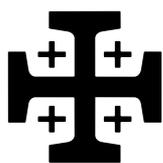
WORSHIP & LITURGY

HANDBOOK



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PART I

Worship & Liturgy

Introduction

The Aim of This Work

Setting out to define terms is a challenging yet worthwhile practice, helping to bring clarity and substance to an idea or reality. This is especially true when defining ideas like *worship* and *liturgy*. In one sense, the call of the Christian is to live a life of worship: glorifying God through delighting in him, obeying his call and commands, and declaring the beauty of his person and the invitation of his works.

Working in tandem with this individual call, the Church is tasked with empowering believers how to offer acceptable and right worship to Almighty God.

“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God *acceptable worship, with reverence and awe...*” **Heb 12:28**

This manual exists to help us think through and apply that calling. How can we offer whole-hearted, theologically-informed, and spirit-empowered worship as individuals and as a redeemed people?

Defining Worship & Liturgy

Worship is an all-of-life response toward God, and an embodied working alongside his purposes and desires in the world. We respond to who God is, and to all that he has done and will do. Worship is a lifestyle fleshed out in a myriad of intentions, actions, and postures with the purpose of glorifying the triune God. The unique worship of the Church, then, realized in specific gathering practices, exists to form and empower the Christian to live a life of worship.

Liturgy is a designed order, a carefully curated system aiding the process of fostering worship and cultivating worshippers. If the people of God are a vine, abiding in Christ, the liturgy is a trellis supporting, protecting, nourishing and building the worship of the church. Liturgy on purpose should serve the worship, and not the other way around.

With these two working together in the church, the *worship* and the *liturgy*, we begin to see and experience a culture of worship that produces worshippers in the kingdom of God.

Becoming Worshippers and Liturgists

“...the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and *those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*” **John 4:23–24**

The purpose of this manual is to train and equip worshippers and liturgists who *worship in spirit and truth*, creating and fostering a community and culture of worship. Much of what follows has grown in the particular soil of Frontline Church and its leaders. It is offered here as a guide for acclimation into our culture or in the hope of being contextualized to other congregations.

The specific structure in which we have ordered this guide comes in three parts [Worship & Liturgy, Gathering, and Leaders & Culture] with a page of recommended resources. These three parts include our collective gathering of wisdom, experiences, failures, giftings, frustrations and hopes for a more glorifying and integrated offering of worship to the only worthy One: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Now, may–

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. **Numbers 6:24–26**

“The fuel of worship is a true vision of the greatness of God; the fire that makes the fuel burn white-hot is the quickening of the Holy Spirit; the furnace made alive and warm by the flame of truth is our renewed spirit; and the resulting heat of our affections is powerful worship, pushing its way out in confessions, longings, acclamations, tears, songs, shouts, bowed heads, lifted hands, and obedient lives. True worship is a way of gladly reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth.” **John Piper**

A Theology of Worship

Lives of Worship

The word *worship* is used in many senses, but at the core, worship is the offering of our lives in response, praise and, gratitude for all God is and all he has done in Jesus. Our very breath, bodies, work, relationships, treasure, time, gifts, and intellect are offered in a response in worship to the Living God. We were made for worship. As

C. S. Lewis wrote, “A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on himself. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other.” We are invited to love the Lord God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Jesus our Worship Leader

One of the beautiful realities of the Christian life is that we have Christ as our mediator, making the way for us to know God and experience him. The Apostle Paul tells us that there is only one mediator between man and God, “the man Jesus Christ.” Ever since the Fall, God, in his mercy, has provided a way for man to experience his presence, but in Jesus we find a final and unrestricted access to our heavenly Father. Our worship places Jesus and his righteousness at the center which gives us the means by which we experience the healing and restoring presence of God.

Jesus, both the means and the object of true worship, steps into the middle of all spiritual confusion. Jesus, the Son of God, is the mediator we need. Jesus explains this to the woman at the well when he says a time is coming and is now here where we will not worship in Jerusalem or any other specific place but true worship is done in spirit and in truth (John 4:21). Genuine worship is not restricted to a place. True worship is the worship of Christ, who bridges the impassable gap between us and God by his shed blood, providing a way into the very presence of God. Even today, as we worship God we do so through Jesus. We gather as his body, in his household, by his Spirit; we pass into this holy place through the torn veil of Christ’s flesh, his blood poured out, his body broken. Jesus is the centerpiece of every gathering and the absolute core of our worship. Jesus informs why we worship, who we worship, and how we worship. Because of Jesus’ work bringing us into covenant with God, we have full access to approach God boldly. Jesus is our worship leader.

Joining the Song

There is an unbroken song of worship that is being sung to the UnCreated One before time began. That song is being sung by all of creation in sky, earth, and sea. It is sung by all of heaven, angels, elders, creatures, and the cloud of witnesses. It is being sung by the Church, visible and invisible, past and present. And it will be sung by the future church on earth and at the end of days as we see in Revelation where history culminates in Jesus being the only one that is worthy and every tribe, nation and tongue gather around him naming him as worthy, holy, wise, and on and on. In this way we are called not to invent or make up worship but to join it. There are two ways to talk about this joining. One, is our individual worship and the other, our gathered church worship. This writing will focus on our gathered worship.

The Beauty and Power of Gathered Worship

When the people of God gather on the Lord's day a portion of the gathering is focused on worship in singing. As we sing, our hearts are invited to engage in these things:

1. **The Awe Of God:** to stand in awe, eyes widen, jaw dropped at the beauty of God found in his person and works, attributes, power, and glory. (Rev 4)
2. **The Gospel of Jesus:** to remember, experience, and proclaim the work of Jesus. The power of God to save, warfare against the enemies of God and the gospel, megaphone
3. **The Experience of the Trinity:** the love of the Father, the compassion of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit, worship is dialogue between, to love what God loves, want what he wants, the Father pours out his love through the Holy Spirit
4. **The Unity of the Gathered Body:** one voice in worship, building up, exhorting, singing to each other psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
5. **The Delight of God:** God sings over us, rejoices, reminds us who we are, pours out love by the Holy Spirit, the Fathers song
6. **The Stirring of Affection:** a renewed love and desire for Jesus, and a reordering of our affections, return to first love
7. **The Courage and Sustenance to face temptation and trial:** hearing truth sung, singing truth, receiving truth, relishing attributes, this is feasting on abundance and being buoyed up in the midst of heartache, temptation, and returning to God
8. **The Formation of the Heart and Mind:** to sing and embody theology that teaches us to know God more, his truths, attributes, his word, and ways

What We Aim to Be

1. **Charismatic.** We welcome God and everything that comes with him, cultivating expectation, desire, gifts of the Spirit, and prophetic encounters. We are expectant: encouraging outward response, desire of the heart, hunger for presence, and reverent hearts with loud cries
2. **Liturgical.** We biblically rehearse the gospel, with a purposefully formative approach.
3. **Rooted.** We desire to be connected to ancient church practices and rich theology.
4. **Reformed.** We celebrate and magnify the doctrines of grace. God speaks first and last in our gatherings (and all throughout) mediated by the accomplished work of Christ in his death and resurrection. Everything flows from the grace of God, including our worship.

5. **Missional.** We embrace the heart of God as he welcomes the outsider, and then meaningfully sends the Christian to live a life of surrender and mission to the world for his purposes.

Liturgy As Formational Framework

Worship and liturgy are aimed at spiritual formation and missional engagement. As we gather, we are yearning for Christ to be formed in his people. A liturgy is a predetermined structure of worship intended to guide and focus our formation rather than restrict it. A liturgy should have depth in its rootedness and accessibility for those outside the family of God. Inside the ancient story of God's grace through Jesus, a liturgy is countercultural spiritual formation for people bombarded by shifting doctrine and culture. A liturgy unites Spirit and Word in the recalibration of our desires and affections by inviting us afresh each week to feast on Christ and participate in his mission.

To help us deepen our understanding, we use the metaphor of trellis and vine. The liturgy is the trellis, anchored, Scripture filled, and intentional, giving shape and direction to the worship service. The Holy Spirit's work is the vine, living, dynamic, and fruitful, bringing presence, beauty, and power. When trellis and vine are united, the structure supports the spiritual vitality that comes from an expectant, hungry, welcoming people of God's very presence. We see the fruit of the vine in the following ways.

1. Christ Formation

Ephesians 4:1-16

We are tossed to and fro by our feelings, culture, competition, and world systems. Our liturgies do the work of anchoring us to Jesus through the Spirit, and in the Body to the end of transforming us into the image of Christ.

2. Missional & Vocational Living

Isaiah 61:1-4

Our services and liturgies send followers of Jesus into the world as missionaries, to be lived out through their vocation so that by the power of the Spirit, God's people might offer renewal to the world, beauty for ashes, and the rebuilding of ruins.

3. Gospel Remembrance

1 Corinthians 15:3

Our liturgies remind us of God's story and give us context for how it collides with our story. They invite us to rehearse the story and frames our sight around the gospel as our greatest narrative.

4. Affection Orientation

John 6:60, Psalm 73:25, Psalm 27

In our services, we come to the intersection of worldly love and heavenly love in the gathered church. We offer up and allow our hearts to be realigned with God by forsaking earthly desires and returning to our first love. We live toward what we love and we do not always love the right things; our liturgies help us re-learn correct loves.

5. Kingdom Reflection & Transformation

Philippians 2:9-11, Revelation 1:17-19

Our liturgies unite Word and Spirit for the people of God to stand in redemptive history with longing for the return of Christ and the restoration of all things. As God's chosen people we want to be a prophetic symbol to the world and to each other that reflects what is to come in the culmination of history and the coming of God's Kingdom. We bodily represent all tribes, colors, and language gathering around Jesus, coming expectantly and asking God to do on earth as it is in heaven.

6. Trinitarian Experience

Matthew 3:13-17 (Baptism of Jesus), Ephesians 3:14-21 (Fullness of God)

God is three persons, yet one God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have forever existed in loving communion and unbroken relationship. The people of God are invited to join this community. The gathered church is invited to experience a triune relationship through the love and heart of the Father, the full work of salvation of the Son, and the presence, comfort, conviction, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

PART II

Gathering

A Singing and Praying Church

Singing is an act that marries our hearts, minds, souls, and our strength, nowhere else is this truer than in the gathering of God's people. We take in a breath and exert force through our voice to utter the truth of the gospel set to melody. There is a profound mystery in what happens inside us and among us as we sing (Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 express that we are uniquely filled with the Spirit as we sing together) but this mystery should not cause us to be inattentive to what we sing on Sundays. We work to sing theologically rich songs because it informs our view of God and in turn the way we love God. We work to sing poetically deep songs that awaken and call to the deepest parts of our souls. We work to unite theology and poetry to deepen our hearts' and to transform how we live in and bring our stories to Jesus. In singing, the seeker hears who God is, what he is like, and how his children desire and need him. As our minds are rightly informed of who God is and what he is like, our hearts are increasingly inflamed with affection for him. When our hearts are inflamed with affection for him we can't help but worship and proclaim him with our mouths.

In singing, the Christian...

- Learns to delight in God and to be delighted in by God. (Ps 27:4)
- Wages war against the enemies of God and the gospel. (2 Chron 20)
- Gazes into the windows to God's heart. (1 Sam 10)
- Proclaims of the power of God to save. (Rom 1:16)
- Experiences freedom from bondage and is prepared for the dungeons of life. (Acts 16:25-27)
- Comes to the fountain of life and steps into the light of truth; lies are turned upside down.
- Engages in ancient postures of worship and homage, acting toward authenticity.
- Our singing is fully-orbed, enfolding heart mind soul and strength.

- Beautiful descriptions of the God of scripture.
- Affectionate, desirous, longing toward God.
- Ancient postures of worship and prayer.
- Human stories colliding with the power of the gospel story.
- Delighting in God as we draw near to him and he to us.
- Megaphone of the gospel.
- Fountain of truth, turning lies upside down
- Homage, humility, and gratitude to God himself and his work

Depth and Accessibility

In our gatherings, we invite the unchurched, the de-churched, the church-hurt, and the returning prodigal to come to God. Scripture uses the word “outsider” to describe these groups of people. As the lead worshiper, we need to speak and lead in ways that are understandable and accessible to individuals whose hearts are either far from Jesus or don’t yet know Him. We need to speak missionally.

Missional language doesn’t shy away from the word of God, the beauty and power of the gospel, or the rich, ancient language of our faith. Missional language speaks to the spiritually blind and deaf to wake up and run to a perfect Father through Jesus. There are ancient and sacred phrases of Christianity that we shouldn’t be afraid to use when helpful or briefly and un-anxiously explain when necessary.

We always want to stand in the tension of outsider-accessibility and the mystery of the gospel. A critical element in relating to the non-Christian or the prodigal is the authenticity of the leader; these are human, divine image-bearers that we’re leading, they’re not problems we’re supposed to solve—Jesus is the mediator. Something that can help us develop an authentic vulnerability in our leadership is to remember when we were apart from Christ. Standing in and owning our personal stories will help us meet people in the middle of their journeys and lead them to Jesus.

By standing together in the reality that Jesus is calling us to himself, here are some examples of ways to lead to the outsider.

Heart

We aim to appeal to and with authentic emotion, embracing vulnerability and humility from the stage. When leading confession, the invitation is offered from a place of lived experience: we, too, are in great need of God’s pardon and declare God’s grace as recipients not mediators. In order to remove unnecessary barriers, we can also utilize collective language (changing “I’s” to “we’s” and “my’s” to “our’s”) allowing the gospel of Christ to be the only stumbling block.

Mind

We aim to engage intellectually and with clarity to avoid “christianese” and embrace the common terminology and language of our culture. This requires us to know our context, as well as to *speak in definitions* to faithfully steward meaning. A question we ask ourselves after leading is, “did someone clearly hear the *whole* gospel of Jesus Christ?” Acting as theological dieticians, we aim for balance both in tone and content.

Soul

We aim to appeal to and reveal the basic human longing for meaning. Recognizing our own story, we offer our leadership from an authentic individual journey that connects with the collective humanity of the room. Utilizing Scripture in song, we sing God’s Word to ourselves and others, helping identify and diagnose cultural idolatries. As we are faithful to his Word in our own stories, we invite people into the eternality of God’s story and his redemptive timeline.

Strength

We aim for the elements of our services to be accessible, while stewarding the mysteries of God. With the goal of connecting to people, we care about the hospitality of our space in its aesthetic appearance and welcoming design. We strive to embody hospitality both on and off of the stage, avoiding a “green-room” mentality for the sake of connecting and welcoming. We invite all to confess their sins and receive Jesus’ saving power, and cleansing forgiveness. We want to be an intercessory people that lay ourselves between heaven and earth for the lost among us and in the world. Fencing the Table, we invite *all* to first come to Jesus, then to enjoy his sustaining grace and the unity of the body. With the purpose of bearing witness to our city and world, we offer the outsider the freedom to participate and/or simply observe.

The Elements of Our Worship

The elements of a liturgical service are neither filler or formality. They serve as intentional rhythms to help us rehearse the gospel and shape the spiritual life and heart of God’s people. Every element has a purpose with its ultimate aim of lifting our hearts and eyes to Jesus and his work. The elements are a structured way to unite Spirit and Word, nurture formation, and participate in God’s mission. To further use the aforementioned metaphor, the following liturgy elements the trellis in which we can grow and produce fruit.

Call To Worship | *An invitation from God to all humanity to behold and join the story, work, and eternal worship of Jesus.*

The call to worship is an invitation to all humanity to join the story, work, and worship of God that is moving in heaven and earth. The Church joins worship that is already happening with creation, angels, elders, creatures, the cloud of witnesses, and the community of believers throughout history. God invites us into what he’s

already doing. Through Scripture and historical text, we invite people to the heart of God. For the Christian, the call to worship is an offer to come to the feast of grace and receive help in the presence of God. To the seeker it's an invitation to come and receive Jesus and be added into the family of God.

When we lead the call to worship...

- We invite the congregation to stand; a symbol of celebrating Christ's resurrection from death by rising to our physical feet.
- We are concise and clear in our explanation/invitation and we are welcoming and hospitable to the believer and outsider alike.
- We read the scripture with clarity, authority, hospitality, and warmth.

Confession & Assurance | *A call to acknowledge and forsake sin against God and one another, and an invitation to receive the assurance of a new identity in the finished work of Christ.*

Luther noted that Jesus' intention for the whole of a Christian's life would be one of repentance.

Inside of our liturgies, a confession and assurance (of our being pardoned by Jesus) is a call to own and repent of our sins against God and our fellow man. This confession includes sins that we're aware of (commission) and those that we are unaware of (omission). It can also include confession applicable to the individual or for the congregation as a whole. Following the confession of our sins, we receive the assurance of what Christ has done with our sin, with death, and that we are being transformed and conformed into his image and our new identity by the Holy Spirit. This is a removal of our false-selves and a look at the depth of our sin and the beauty of Jesus' grace. Our confessions should aim at being rooted in Scripture, but our assurances should explicitly be derived from Scripture as we are pronouncing God's promise and pardon over his people. In the confession and assurance, the Christian is given a renewed invitation to confess, forsake their sin, and receive the declarations of God's forgiveness. The non-Christian is exposed to see the core problem of sin in all mankind and hears the invitation from Jesus to remedy our sickness and make us new, body and soul.

When we lead the confession and assurance we should...

- Invite the congregation to honestly examine their sin, turn from themselves and their sin, and turn back to God. It can help to tie this invitation to a scriptural imperative (1 John 1:9 & Acts 3:19)
- Help them to see that confession is not contrition to earn grace, but is a unique part of growing in Christ as he is moving towards us always and has already forgiven us before we confess.
- Read the confession, slowly and clearly so that it can be followed easily while connecting our heart, mind, strength, and soul to the words we are speaking.

- Boldly and emphatically proclaim an assurance over those who place trust in Jesus; our bodies and voices should match the words we speak.
- Work to physically posture God's people in ancient prayer positions of, contrition (a hand over the heart), reception (hands opened before the body), and declaration (hands raised).

Intercession | *The church's offering of prayer through Jesus for God to save the lost, right injustice, and shape the world.*

Scripture puts mysterious and beautiful imperatives on the prayers of God's saints for the world, Revelation 8:4 and 2 Chronicles 7:14-16 being most compelling. The church intercedes for the world around it by praying through Jesus. This is one of the primary ways God's people labor with God in the world. These intercessory prayers invite God to shape history and the world, right injustice, demonstrate his power, and bring salvation to those far from him. We want to spiritually stand before the throne of grace, not just for people in the room, but to change the world around us. We are asking, seeking and knocking on the door of Jesus the King of a kingdom that has no end. He is Christ crucified and Christ resurrected. He lives and moves, works, and never sleeps. When the church intercedes it brings a people, a place, or a purpose into the presence of God through the vehicle of prayer. When we intercede, the Christian participates with God's mission and heart in prayer, and the non-Christian sees how God and his people care for the world.

When we lead intercessory prayer...

- Present God's heart for the given topic of prayer (*why does God care and how does that inform how and what we pray?*).
- By the power of the Holy Spirit in you and the believers present, pray through Jesus, pray bold prayers, and lead people to join you in prayer, rather than simply watching.
- Clearly pray God's heart for the focus of our intercession (people/place/or events), because of Jesus it's not presumptuous to ask for God's will.
- We should pray more than we talk/set up or introduce the subject of our prayer.
- Use compelling pictures or stats related to our prayer focus when they're available.
- Choose a prayer leader who is burdened/passionate for the intercessory topic.
- There is a moment in the liturgy for intercessory prayer, but be open to finding new spaces to lead into prayer. Ie. spontaneously or inside a song that could highlight the prayer time.
- Intercession aims (typically) outside the walls of the church, teaching followers of Jesus God's heart, and the outsider what God cares about.

Intercession Models

Here are a few examples of focus in prayer to offer inside of our specific intercession models:

- **Biblical Justice:** Praying for God’s justice in a number of ways— orphan and foster care; care for the poor (the un-housed and impoverished); sanctify of life (the unborn, the abused, and the elderly or neglected); unity in the body of Christ (reconciliation and restoration).
- **Vocation:** Praying for God’s purpose and presence in all fields—medical, engineering, entrepreneurs, business, artists, education, government, technology, motherhood, singleness, etc.
- **Family:** Praying for marriages, parents and children, and foster-care.
- **Revival:** Praying for revival and renewal in our context—the Lord’s Prayer for friends, co-workers, and neighbors/neighborhoods.
- **Community:** Praying for moments and milestones within the life of the church. Child dedication, baptisms, community group leader commissioning & Group Connect.
- **Missional:** Praying with God’s heart for church planting, our City Partners and city renewal.
- **Nations:** Praying with God’s heart to the ends of the earth: Unreached people groups, the global Church, the persecuted Church. Missions, specific nations, and missionaries.
- **Cultural:** Praying according to the cultural calendar in regard to holidays, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day. This includes cultural and political moments (elections, uncertainty), for government leaders and tragedies.

Types of Prayers

- Written and responsive.
- Pastorally led.
- Guided through movements.
- Congregationally prayed out loud.

Gospel-Welcome | *An embodiment of the peace and hospitality of Jesus by welcoming each other as the family of God.*

To walk in obedience to Jesus when the church gathers we put an emphasis on *“welcoming one another as Christ welcomed us”* (Romans 15:7). This also serves to remind us that *“once we were not a people, but now we are God’s people”* (1 Peter 2:10). However, as with all elements of our liturgy, we are also endeavoring to spiritually form the saints and come alongside the Spirit’s work of inward transformation. Welcoming one another in the peace of Christ and as Christ welcomes us trains and helps us embody the character of Jesus and new habits of gospel hospitality are

formed in us. We genuinely embrace one another, want to know one another, and want each other to know Jesus more tangibly. Hospitality like Jesus' serves and honors those within the family of God and particularly those outside the family of God.

For the Christian, our welcome reminds us we are a family. A gospel-welcome allows the outsider to experience and be received by God's family.

When we lead the welcome...

- We reach from words just sung or prayed to foster a moment of deep hospitality towards everyone in the room.
- We genuinely express that "we are glad you are with us this morning."
- We, with brevity and variety, remind the people of God's hospitality and the implications for us as his people. An example: "God ran toward us while we were enemies and strangers."
- We warmly invite the congregation to move toward each other with the peace of Christ.

Worship in Giving | *A generous and sacrificial offering of our earthly treasure back to God.*

Our worship does not stop with the music. Worship in giving is a continuation of our worship that followers of Jesus participate in by financial generosity. We offer an offering that states, "All I have is from God. God has my heart, my time, my treasure, and my talents." All followers of Jesus are commanded to give as an act of discipleship and obedience, generously and sacrificially. As we lead worship in giving we want to present a big vision of God's command towards generosity and doxological call to obedience of the command. It's also important to supply a steady diet of instances/stories in the local church in which generosity through giving impacted our mission or the lives of individuals. For the Christian, worship and mission collide in worship in giving. We war against greed in our hearts and our lust to gain more. Our attitude towards money is transformed as our giving advances the kingdom and empowers compassion, church planting, and local city partnerships. The seeker is invited to see the value believers put on God over earthly treasure and materialism.

When we lead worship in giving...

- We introduce ourselves and briefly explain that this time is meant to continue our worship by ordering our hearts and affections towards God with our giving
- We invite the serve crew to come forward
- We give a brief vision (a why?) for generosity and a story example when available. Examples:
 - "Everything we have is from the hand of a good God that supplies our needs, Money tries to control our hearts and when we release it back to God, we are saying Jesus is King."

- *“This is God’s house, and this is our house. Investing here in the local church is powerful. It is an investment that has eternity in mind.”*
- *“Giving empowers the mission of God through our church to our cities and the world.”*
- We clearly call the Christian to obedient giving but offer Jesus to the non-Christian with hospitable and welcoming language.
 - Example: *“If you are not a follower of Jesus we are just glad you are here. It is a brave thing that you’re here today and we welcome you with all your questions, frustrations, anger, or cynicism. If you are a follower of Christ, regular giving is part of being a disciple. Jesus gave everything and the following after him with our everything is the call.”*
- We pray, asking God to bless the generosity of his people for our good and his glory.
- We deliver pertinent announcements for the broader congregation, using slides for each announcement and keeping our overall time under five minutes.

Reading of the Word | *The surrender to God’s good and authoritative Word.*

When the King speaks, his people stand. When we gather, we stand under the Word of God as it is read over us. We set apart a moment of our liturgy to lift the Word as sacred, to physically posture ourselves underneath the Word, and to offer our hearts to be formed by the preaching of the Word. This liturgical moment serves the Christian by standing under the authority of the Word and letting it shape them. The non-Christian gets a view into a God’s people relinquishing their own man-made authorities and yielding to his.

When we lead the reading of the Word...

- We ask the people to stand for the reading of God’s Word.
- We say: *“The scripture for today’s sermon comes from _____. The Word of God speaks to us...”*
- We read the passage clearly, ensuring that it matches what is present on the screen.
- When finished, we conclude: *“This is God’s Word to us.”*
- The people respond *“Thanks be to God.”*

Preaching of the Word | *The primary means that God speaks to the gathered church through Scripture.*

Preaching is a means of worship, evangelism, and discipleship, and calls us back to the authority of God and away from our own autonomy, and away from trusting the world’s systems to save. The preaching and proclamation of the word of God are full of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. Heralding God’s word explicitly shapes his people, calls out to those who are far from God, and calls both to see the good news of Jesus.

To help the preaching of the word...

- We make sure slides of notes are clearly laid out.
- We make sure our sound engineers have worked out all of our sound kinks pre-service.

Communion | *A feast to remember Jesus, receive fresh grace, and look toward the return of Christ to restore all things.*

In communion, we join the church across all of the globe and throughout all history “proclaiming our Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). We are remembering the life, death, resurrection of Jesus through the ordinance and sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. By partaking and sharing in the experience of Jesus, this is a meal of remembrance, a proclamation of the gospel, and a feast of grace to receive sustaining strength. We look back on his crucifixion and resurrection, stand in the present grace of Christ in us, and look ahead with anticipation of Christ’s return. The elements reach from Scripture to anchor us in the story and prophetically point us to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 16:6-9). By faith, the meal enlivens us to trust in Christ for this life until that day comes. For the Christian, this is a meal of grace and repentance. As we fence the table from the non-Christian, it is an explicit invitation for them to come to Jesus and be baptized.

When we lead communion...

- We consider the sermon in light of the gospel and how the gospel speaks and calls us to the table.
- We clearly frame the institution of the eucharist with the language of 1 Cor 11:23-26.
- We fence the table, inviting those who have forsaken sin and been baptized to the feast. We also invite non-Christians to faith in Jesus and to forgo this symbolic meal which would have no effect on them without faith.
- We provide slides for prayer for those who do not approach the Lord’s Supper.

Ministry of Prayer | *An invitation to bring the needs of our bodies, hearts, and minds to the care of God.*

We respond to the preached Word, the work of the Spirit, and invite the congregation to bring forward their needs for prayer and ministry. We believe that God cares for the body, the mind, the heart, and the soul and that the sick and suffering can receive healing, encouragement, salvation. We also pray with one ear toward the individual and the other toward the Spirit of God, asking for a prophetic word that might lift their eyes to Jesus and that they would sense the presence of the Spirit. For the Christian, response with prayer and ministry is provided to bring forward needs, weakness, sin, wounds. For the seeker, it is a time to bring questions and conversations around the gospel, the claims of Jesus, and to put their faith in Christ.

When we lead the response in prayer and ministry...

- We invite the pastors and leaders of the church to come forward to receive those in need.
- We cast a brief vision for God's desire to heal, care for, and be near those who call out to him.
- We use winsome language towards non-Christians in the room and invite them to bring questions and struggles forward for one-on-one conversations.
- A slide is overhead to point people in the direction of prayer ministry or community connection.

Sending | *A charge to live and work as the faithful presence of God in our city.*

Paired with our scriptural blessing, we now charge God's people to live as salt and light. Having withdrawn into Christ, we now send the congregation to return to the world, scattering into the city with God's heart as missionaries in all occupations, vocations, and neighborhoods. For the Christian, the sending is a charge to go into the world with God's mission in their hearts. For the seeker, the sending shows the Church's role in that mission.

When we lead the sending...

- We remind the congregation of our mission and the role they play in embodying that mission: *"You have six days between now and next Sunday, to love God, love people, and push back darkness."*
- Offer ways they can live in the 6 days on a mission. Ie. community groups, serving neighbors, etc.

Benediction (Blessing) | *A blessing from the authority of Scripture spoken over the people of God.*

A benediction is a pastoral, scriptural impartation of grace over the people that invite them to receive and walk in the blessings and promises of God as they are sent back into their city for the next six days. The benediction blesses the people of God as they're sent into the Great Commission. The non-Christian sees followers of Jesus living by the power, grace, and blessings of God.

When we lead the benediction...

- We invite people to stand.
- We invite them to lift their eyes to heaven and open their hands in a receptive, ancient prayer posture.
- We ensure the passage is on screen.
- We meet the tone of the service and moment in our speech and cadence.
- We read the passage with gentle, fatherly authority.

- We punctuate our gathering with a charge to live their lives in light of Christ:
“In the peace and power of Christ, you are sent back into your city”

Baptism | *A declaration of our faith and union in Jesus’ death and resurrection, and a sign of our covenant to the Body of Christ.*

Baptism is an ancient practice and sacrament given to us by Jesus, intended to be practiced by the Church until his return. Baptism functions as a sign of repentance and faith in Christ, the first act of obedience to Jesus, and the final step of conversion (Acts 2:37-39). Through repentance and faith in Jesus, we die to our old life of enslavement to sin and our new life in Christ begins. This spiritual reality is signified in an embodied way through baptism by fully immersing the professing believer in the watery grave and raising them up into new life in Christ. Baptism is the primary public and external way a person identifies themselves as a follower of Jesus. Baptism is a declaration that our lives are no longer our own but have been bought with the blood of Jesus. As a result, baptism goes hand-in-hand with repentance, faith, and receiving the Holy Spirit. Similar to Old Testament practices of covenant-keeping, a believer’s baptism is a public sign of a vertical covenant between the believer and God. We are, in essence, saying, “My old life is no more, and the life I now live is one of fidelity to God by faith in Jesus Christ.” Similarly, it is also a sign of a horizontal covenant between a new believer with a particular and specific local body of Christians. We are here saying, *“I enter into fidelity with you who bear witness to my covenant with God, fidelity in my commitment to you, our joined-discipleship and your correction of me.”*

When we administer baptisms it is helpful to briefly explain the benefit, weight, and beauty of its practice, as well as lead the congregation in the appropriate celebration. Baptism is:

1. Union in Christ’s Death and Resurrection
2. A sign of covenant faithfulness to God through faith in Jesus, sealed by the Holy Spirit
3. A covenant to a local expression of the family of God

The Songs We Sing

We sing to exalt the character of God, remember and believe his promises, rehearse and receive his gospel, experience the presence of the trinity, preserve the unity of the body of Christ, and empower the mission of God to the world.

The songs that we sing help give shape and meaning to the spiritual lives of our people. From them, we receive truth, language, and purpose that defines the way that we see God, talk to God, and walk with him in the world. The songs we sing act like theological and spiritual food for our people. We want the singing diet of our church to be balanced and healthy. This requires intentionality as we decide what songs to sing in our gatherings.

As we choose songs we ensure that they land in one or more of the following categories.

- **Songs of Exaltation** exalt and adore God for who he is and what he has done.
- **Songs of Proclamation** declare gospel truth and proclaim who we are in light of what God has done.
- **Songs of Devotion** help the people of God aim our allegiance toward God and his Kingdom.
- **Songs of Desire** create longing and hunger for the presence of God.

We categorize our singing into four containers to ensure that the songs we choose will allow a clear path for intergenerational singing that connect to the ancient church, global church, and our church in particular, in our gatherings.

- **Global Songs** are songs that are being sung in the church around the world. Often characterized by CCLI popularity. If the global church connects to a song there is often value for our church to sing it as well.
- **Heritage Songs** are songs that we've grown up singing in the church. Heritage songs will often bridge the gap of unfamiliarity for those returning to church from wandering or recovering. Our congregations are diverse in age and these songs provide familiarity to the majority of attenders.
- **Ancient Songs** are hymns that have been sung by the church over the last centuries. These songs connect us to the saints throughout the ages, grounding our singing to the confession of faithful brothers and sisters who lived in unique cultures now passed into the presence of God.
- **Tribal Songs** are songs written for and from our current, local expressions. These songs give voice to and journal our people's unique journey with God. These are songs from and for our people, giving them prayers, hopes, truths to sing as they remain steadfast in trial, mourn losses, declare purpose, and even rejoice in specific graces that God gives.

Psalmist Expression

Our setlists should express the full color of human emotion toward God with prophetic proclamation. When we lean too heavily on one emotion, or paint with too broad a brush, we are not offering a balanced spiritual diet. The larger the size of the congregation the more challenging this becomes. We set the emotional temperature in the room and lead the congregation into any emotional changes that may occur over the course of our set list. When we build a setlist we need to ask how many emotional ranges are represented in our offering. Including but not limited to:

- **Celebration:** songs that attach us to our hope and the finished work of Jesus.
- **Lamentation:** songs that help us mourn our sin or the brokenness of the world.
- **Devotion:** songs that stir our desire and affection for God.

- Meditation: songs to help us listen to God speaking.
- Cruciform: songs to help us suffer.
- Eucharistic/Ecclesial: songs that join us to Jesus' resurrected presence in the household of God.
- Prophetic: songs that cut to our hearts in a particular moment or season.
- Proclamatory: songs of heralding forgotten or hard-to-remember truth.

Energy and Disruptions

When we build a set list we try to think through the *feel* that music creates and how we can steward that energy to match or lead our emotions. Energy is experienced in the room. As poets and artists we're attempting to take people on the gospel journey through music and singing.

- We think about disruptions on purpose, such as silence, prophetic exhortation or prayer.
- We avoid accidental “crashes” of the flow or distracting transitions between songs.
- We consider the keys our songs are in to aid us in stewarding this energy.
- Beats per minute matter in the songs we choose and arrange. This is usually the first energy experienced in the room and it impacts our senses deeply.
- We plan where our “exclamation marks” can be used, this can include intentionally leading the church in applauding God.
- It helps to lead through our set lists in our home and ask the Holy Spirit to help us see windows in the set that we might step into and diverge from the plan that is on paper. This is also a really helpful practice to connect our hearts to the songs we lead.

Things to Consider

- The point is to help people sing. Sing in a way that others can join.
- Singing is congregational and should help stir us up as well as teach us how to live life in line with God's will; in the mundane of everyday life, in the wedding feasts, and at the graveside.
- Singing and music is artistic but worship music is not built to serve the artist, it glorifies God, not the self.
- Singing in the church isn't cold science or sleepy confessions, it's full of heart and truth.
- Consider a seasonal catalog of songs for congregational knowability (more on this later).
- Build your set to serve the space you've been given to lead and link it to the fullness of the whole service.

- It can be better to sing less songs heart-fully than more songs half heartedly.
- Consider how the mind and heart work together in the arc of the set. What is theologically rich but void of emotion and vice versa?
- Ask, “*who is in the room?*” As often as you can. See people’s faces and stories, not just a crowd. The congregation is full of followers, the blind, the prodigal, and the outsider. Our songs can meet all of them uniquely.

We gather to sing our songs so we will know the truth so well that we can go out into the world and we say, “We don’t believe your lies anymore! We won’t be squeezed into your mold!” And so we can speak to our fearful heart and say, “Heart, I don’t believe your lies anymore!” (or as Charles Wesley put it, “Arise my soul arise! Shake off your guilty fear!”) Because Jesus can trump even what my heart says! And Jesus does trump our hearts as He becomes beautiful and believable to you. That is why we gather in worship. That is why I urge you; use the hymns of the church! God is using them to mold us to the truth, restore our sanity, and open our eyes to see Jesus as beautiful and believable. Kevin Twit

PART III

Leaders & Culture

Integrated Worship Leader

As we've mentioned, our desire in leading worship and liturgy is to spiritually form God's people to love him with all of their faculties; an integration of our heart, mind, strength, and soul. This is a lifelong work and journey that we all partake in. For the sake of our discussion on leading worship, we ought to state that leading others toward integration of their intellect, actions, emotions, and capacity for meaning happens inside of us first. Here are a few marks of how we can move towards integration in our love for God and in our leadership.

Leaders with Soul

- We experience grace in story. As we own our story, we grow to see how we are tied to the greater story of Jesus and his Bride.
- We practice power in weakness. We understand our weakness and how God's sufficient power rests on us in the midst of it.
- We are filled by the vine. We live out of communion with our Father as the source of life.

Leaders with Heart

- We have a prophetic sense of the season and time we, our church, and our culture are in.
- We see faces and not just crowds when we lead. We grow in relational leadership and in practicing Jesus' model for discipleship (i.e. the one, the three, the twelve, and the seventy).
- We grow in servant leadership and truth-telling by washing the feet, so to speak, of our people while also sewing the gospel into their hearts.

Leaders with Thoughtfulness

- We intentionally allow Scripture to shape us, in our individual lives and as a body.

- We live liturgically. We order not just service plans, but our very lives, inside the tidal pull of God’s interruptions.
- We work for congruency and alignment with the mission of the church.

Leaders with Strength

- We embody an expressed vision. We live and work life that is a tangible, lived example of what we call people to.
- We communicate clearly, simply, and consistently, both with our congregations and in the expectations we lay out for our teams.
- We prepare to lead by reverse engineering projects. This requires our awareness of the needs, goals, and purpose of the task at hand in the hope that we’d see a beautiful execution.

Spirit-Filled Worship Leadership

The Father is cascading his love out on his people by the Holy Spirit. If our Father works at his own good pleasure to freely give his affection to his people, it means that there are moments in our services that God moves, that we did not anticipate and are not in our service plans. If we are too rigid or unmoving with our plans we may be missing the opportunities of God’s intervention. Our hope is to develop a culture of dependency and expectancy in the Holy Spirit.

In Luke 4 we see something profound that connects ancient threads of God’s ministry to his people. Jesus stands and reads the prophet Isaiah, and proclaims that the prophecy has been fulfilled in his reading, i.e. his incarnation and ministry. The statement is scandalous at that moment, to be sure. However, the confounding love of God for his people does not end there. With the benefit of the full canon of Scripture, we look onward to Paul’s words in Colossians 1, “... it is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” As worship leaders, how much more ought we to embody and lead from the ministry of the anointed One, Jesus? In Luke 4, Jesus stands as the linchpin between God’s ministry towards his people in Isaiah 61 and our souls’ transformation into ministers of reconciliation. God has anointed Jesus, and thus Jesus works through us, to bring good news to poor, bind up brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to captives, comfort those who mourn, give beauty in place of ashes, to name a few.

The Aim of Spirit-Filled Worship

Spirit Filled Worship Exalts Jesus

- Spirit filled worship points to Jesus. In dependence it proclaims, “I’m Not The Christ”
- Jesus is ultimate and the center. His attributes are relished and his doctrines cherished.
- Worship leaders prepare the way for Jesus by removing blockades, exclaiming desire, proclaiming the gospel, and by singing the Scriptures.

- We exalt him because Jesus is everything we need. He draws close to the brokenhearted (Ps 34:18), gives grace to the humble (James 4:6), draws near to us as we draw near to him (James 4:8), refreshes us when there is repentance (Acts 3:19), satisfies the longing soul (Ps 107:9).
- The work of turning the spiritual furnace up is knowing His ministry is fuller and deeper. Christ must increase and be magnified in our worship.

Spirit Filled Worship Welcomes the Spirit

- The Spirit delights in displaying the Son. Worship is Spirit-filled when Christ is on display!
- We are to hunger for God's presence and all that comes with it—no caveat. We desire his gifts, his convictions, his grace, and his will.
- Our expectation is that God can do anything at any time. Every element is consumed and filled up by Gods presence.
- We are a welcoming people, praying prayers of consent, surrender, longing, and thirst for the tangible presence of God.

Spirit Filled Worship Enjoys the Father

- We welcome the Father heart of God and we want to experience his love.
- We receive and lead out of the Father's love.
- We rejoice at the voice of the Father to his children.
- Spirit-filled worship lives out of affectionate friendship with God.

Spirit Filled Worship Wars Against Enemies of Exaltation

- We fight for authenticity and against self centered performance.
- We lead with courage and act on what is needed over what is wanted.
- We don't allow cynicism to be wet blankets on fires of God; instead we edify, exhort, and call out God's work as often as we see it.
- We herald the power of God and pray for encounters with his presence.
- We push back on cultures urge for an adrenaline rush and slow ourselves down to sense the Spirit.
- We lead actively to increase our expectation of God's movement and deny passivity which leads to dullness, numbness, and distraction.
- We depend on the Holy Spirit and fight sinful urge to control, manipulate, or coerce.

The Work of the Spirit-Filled Leader

Raises Expectation

The Spirit of God is the rushing wind, blowing through the Church. Our vision of the Spirit's work in the empowered Church begins in Acts 2. In Acts 2 we see beautiful work of unity in fellowship, awe overcoming souls, wonders and signs, unity, generosity, and powerful evangelism. It is of key importance that our eyes and ears are open to God and the people we are leading. A great question to ask once plans have been made and rehearsed is, "God what is not on the plan?," "What else would you like to do?"

Practices Voluntary Weakness, I Must Decrease

- Voluntary weakness is the pursuit of humility, live the way of Jesus
- Personal consecration/fasting, feasting on Jesus
- Pursuit of intimacy with God
- Practicing hearing God's voice in word, prayer, "God what would you say?"

Cultivates Spontaneity

- Practice in the quiet. Singing your prayers. Sing a new song.
- Knowing your songs. Memorization.
- Prepping a team. Anxious vs peaceful presence.
- Preparing a congregation. Singing the directives/transitions.
- Spontaneous worship. Liturgical windows.

Postures Hearts

- Actively and passively with all humility
- With directive leadership and in slow patience up the Holy Spirit
- With reverence to God and toward risk to experience his presence

Embraces Risk

One of the practical ways we prevent this is to plan for spontaneity. Our services and songs are full of *windows* that we can step into. These windows are moments that we pause, sit inside the stillness of a song or a Scripture and actively listen to anything God may be speaking to his people. Sometimes we open the window, step out, and there isn't anything in that moment, and that's okay. We can step back into the flow of our services and move on. It's important that we identify these windows with our teams during service planning and during rehearsals. Make sure they're aware of the plan for that window. What chord structure are you circling for that window? Who is leading and listening for the Spirit in that window? There is certainly risk involved, but it's better to lead from trust in God and risk the window than let a moment God may use pass us—and God's people—by.

- Look around the room—what is God doing?
- Sing the Scripture, truth
- God you can do anything at anytime
- You’ve been working all night—we join in
- Spirit-led courage vs fear of man

The Practice of The Spirit-Filled Gathering

We want to help create a culture that eagerly pursues the practice of and has an active sensitivity to the gifts of the Spirit outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. A culture is expressed and felt in tangible artifacts. A Spirit-filled culture is an invitation to reflect heaven on earth; “*Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*” As we step into leading worship this is our primary prayer and hope, it creates an ecosystem of spirit-filled expectancy among our teams and congregation. We work and lead with urgency and fervor because we truly *desire* that this Kingdom reality is something we would get to taste and see. We also work and lead with confidence because this Kingdom is not ours, it is Jesus’.

Practice of Prayer

- We pray as warfare. We pray in tongues. We lay hands on the sick.
- We pray for the preacher. We pray for prophetic ministry time.
- We pray with heart, voice, and body.

Practice of Listening

- We listen with sensitivity to the Spirit’s voice intervention.
- We listen with expectation for visitation, with faith in what God is doing.
- We listen and ask, “What is God doing with His people? What picture, Scripture, or prophetic words might you give us for the day?”

Practice of Exhortation

- We edify and exhort the people of God, building up, not breaking them down with cynicism.
- We proclaim to turn lies upside down. Truth-tellers who have an ear to God.
- We stir encouragement and fan gifts into flame.
- We risk and leave no space for passivity and half heartedness in our leadership.
- We prepare the way to Jesus. We remove blockades; physically, relationally and spiritually.

Team Culture

Every organization or congregation has artifacts of what it holds as valuable. These artifacts are expressions or manifestations of what really matter to the organization as a whole. If we don't do the work to express what we value, our artifacts will lack depth or become unhealthy. Part of building our worship culture and maintaining its health involves continually returning to our stated values and guiding principles. When we start to see artifacts in our culture of things we don't value we can return to these to anchor us. Likewise, when we begin to see artifacts of health and depth in our teams, we can trace the results back to these started values.

Conformity to Jesus

- We believe that Jesus is preeminent above all things and that the Word of God rules over our lives. We want to be a people characterized by our affection for Jesus.
- We aim to display Jesus in our character by living gospel lives. This means that the life we live off-stage is a model for the congregation. Our lives should say, "Follow me as I follow Christ."
- We work to integrate our heart, mind, soul and strength. We lead from our whole selves, including the messy parts. We do not live divided lives and we do not hide behind facades or masks.
- We are aware of God's beauty and glory at the center of all gatherings. Our cynicism, suffering, or sadness conforms towards the beauty of God.
- We have love for Jesus' Bride.

Community

- We actively engage team participation.
- We aim to know and to be known. We do not live on an island.
- We move toward membership, fidelity to a people, embrace care, discipleship, discipline, and responsibility. Biblically speaking, we are entrusting ourselves to an authority outside of ourselves.
- We commit to discipleship and personal formation.
- Community demands friendship and knowing; conflict and forgiveness. It is not transactional in nature, but when we spend our time and lives we reap the benefit and payment of this care and love.
- We create hospitable atmospheres, actions, and speech while we embody Jesus.
- We share our lives and stories like singing prophets on a journey together.

Coaching

- When we give or receive coaching our identity rests in Jesus.

- We are to be teachable, humbling ourselves as being constant learners.
- We give constructive feedback and encouragement to lift the arms of our team.
- We avoid flattery and instead offer blessing and celebration of one another.
- We accept our God-given sphere of influence and live the life assigned to us. (1 Cor 7:17)
- We're on a journey learning how to give and receive help, blessing, and correction together.

Communication

- We see vulnerability as a strength and choose not to hide from each other when things are tense or difficult, bringing the grace of God to bear.
- We communicate our logistical, emotional, and spiritual needs. It's okay to not be okay. It's not okay to not be okay and not say anything about it.
- We value individual practice, communication, and timeliness for rehearsals.

Collaboration

- We value excellence, offering our best to delete distraction while we aim to glorify God's beauty in creativity.
- Comparison is the death of joy. Cheer each other on, outdo one another in showing honor, and celebrate each other's successes.
- Offer creativity with confidence, humility, and open hands.
- We work as a team and share ideas for the good of the whole. We trust one another enough to open ourselves up to being told no or disagreed with.

Legacy

- We multiply leadership and help each other move more toward who God is making us to be as worshippers and as leaders.
- We give away responsibility, letting God stretch us before we think we're ready.
- We think generationally. If a child is born into this church and graduates from this church, what have they learned and experienced that shape their beliefs and living?
- How does our leadership and embodiment of our values shape that person?

Culture Killers

A healthy culture is one that is worth pruning and correcting. As mentioned above, without clearly stated, healthy values, the artifacts of our culture will not only drift but may end up creating an unhealthy culture. These are some negative values that we should be wary of and war against.

Culture Killers of Team

- **Pride or Anti-authoritarian attitudes:** Unwillingness to hear feedback or adjust thinking.
- **Cynicism or frequent negativity:** This type of bitterness and distrust of leadership can affect an entire culture or team.
- **Insecurity, Shame, and Isolation :** Crafting internal narratives that can harm the way we think about ourselves or others.
- **Fear of man:** When man's approval makes us afraid to step out and lead with boldness.
- **Perfectionism:** Mistaking excellence as the end goal of our leadership.
- **Radical Individualism:** Anti-collaborative mentality that is self-ishly subversive.
- **Laziness:** In most instances of laziness, we find ourselves settling, unwilling to help hold up the bar of excellence and team.
- **Competition or Comparison:** Rooted in the belief that if we were just understood or applauded we would be content, rather than seeing Jesus as the ultimate source of contentment.
- **Victim Mentality or Martyr Complex:** When the wounds of your story have taught you to believe that you are always the injured party or that you should always sacrifice your needs for the sake of others. This often pushes blame on others rather than owning responsibility.

Writing: Liturgies & Songwriting

Writing a Liturgy

At the center of writing a liturgy is to bring congruency to the heart, mind and soul through Scripture and prayer, to God. A rich liturgy has many of the following elements.

- **Doxological:** focuses on God, Father, Son, Holy spirit
- **Biblical:** aligns with Scripture
- **Confessional:** calls the heart and mind to own what is true about our sin and God
- **Participatory:** written in a rhythm that can be joined in by a group of people
- **Culturally adaptive**
- **Creativity is desired but should support the aim of the liturgy**
- **Missional:** language written for followers of Jesus but doesn't leave outsiders confused, and gives them an opportunity to see a life of beauty in Jesus and the good news offered to them

Although there are many creative ways to write a liturgy, a typical liturgy has the following elements.

- A call to worship from scripture that invites people to look on God
- A doxological statement about God that leads us into confession
- A confessional statement that may or may not be responsive, that brings ownership to how we've sinned against God, neighbor, self, and world
- A gospel assurance built from Scripture that shows how the work of Jesus saves, forgives, redeems, and renames us
- A prayerful blessing from Scripture that invites the work of God in our lives

Liturgical prayers can be powerful to shape and form our hearts to rehearse, embody, and inhabit joining the worship of God, engaging the beauty and attributes of God, aligning our hearts in how we've sinned against God, and celebrating the gospel work of Jesus.

Here is a helpful flow for us when writing as a team.

- Set an initial meeting to bring pre-thought ideas to; Scriptures to undergird writing, sins we need to confess, text or information that could inform the writing.
- Get all of the above on the table and then assign/breakout parts of the writing to individuals or teams that feel specific passions for those portions.
- Set a new due date to bring final writings to work through as a team and bring alignment to all the pieces. This is a good moment to work over grammar and tense and think through the "lenses" provided in the "writing a liturgy" document. Review length of liturgy, syllabic difficulty, think of young and old reading through it, as well as theologians and unchurched.
- Once you feel strongly about the writing, submit it to a different team to bring nuance if needed, offer it to a couple of theological minds, and some final editing by some grammarly minded folks.

Songwriting

Oh sing to the LORD a new song...

Psalms 96:1

What begins as a simple command from the Psalms, becomes a helpful launching point for how and why we should write songs. There is a certain sacredness inherent in the songwriting process as we come to God, singing a song that is uniquely our own. It is a song that starts inside of a singular heart and life (or collection of them) that approaches the holiness of God from an unblazed trail. The Scriptures tell us to sing to the LORD, and to do it with something new. A new vantage point. A new experience. A new burden. A new desire or request. Sing to the LORD a new song...

Writing Songs For and From the Local Church

It is a powerful and terrifying thing when our songs cease to exist solely as our own private prayers to God, and become poems for the people of God to sing. Giving expression, language and focus to the prayers of the church is a wonderful gift, and requires a sobriety of life and context to do it well. This is why we believe that writing for and from the local church matters.

As shepherd-leaders, our desire is for the edification and deepening of the people entrusted to our care and this desire is extended to our songwriting. We want to write for our people, to shape our prayers, in our context and moment. What are the gaps and pit-falls in the current life of our people? What are the things we need to hear from God, to say to God, to offer from God to the world around us? “Outside songs” can help with this, but it is the songs for and from our local church that will filter in and meet the needs of our body with prophetic vision and detail.

1. Write from Communion.

The overflow of the songwriter’s life with God is the most powerful and authentic offering. We want our songs to be birthed out of wrestling with and delighting in God. He is the source of all good things, and that includes the prayers, poems and songs that we offer back to him. A cultivated interior life is the open door into the practice of writing spiritual songs for the people of God to take up.

2. Write with the Word.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...

As Christians, we should live lives saturated in the Word of God. It should inform our daily actions, our words and thoughts, our community and certainly the songs we sing together to God. As songwriters, an open Bible and a heart that is stored up with the Scriptures are essential tools to the task of making melodies and prayers for the church. When we don’t know what we should sing, we should always start with what God has said to us.

3. Write with the Spirit.

When we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, we are meant to allow him influence and power in every area of our lives. This also includes our songwriting. The Spirit wants to communicate God’s heart and burden for the world through you, how much more for him to speak through the songs you are writing. Invite the Holy Spirit into your songwriting and see what happens.

4. Write together.

We are communal beings, made to exist in connection to one another. It is often in the context of writing together where our best ideas are fashioned. Cultivate an individual practice, but lay that practice inside of a community of writers and artists who can bring more color and life to what you make.

5. Write with open hands.

We really can never know in what ways God might use the things that we make. That is not really the point. The true artist makes art for the sake of the gift within them, unconcerned with the outcome of who is impacted. Let God worry about how your offerings are commissioned for his kingdom. You commit to the work, and forget about where it might go.

6. Write all the time.

Just keep writing. Write every single day, even if it's not good (especially if it's not good). Let the practice form you over a lifetime. You will become a better songwriter, more focused and more in tune with the specific voice God has given to you. Keep journals handy, your notes app open, voice memos overflowing... write all the time.

Practical Tools for the Practice of Songwriting

Revisit Purpose

Know why you are doing this. Take a moment to remember God's calling to you in songwriting and name it outloud.

Use a Calendar

Make time for this practice. Plan it out. Block it in your schedule and keep it. It's called a practice for a reason; it needs to be...practiced.

Write Together

Grab a few songwriters/musicians/readers to listen and read your songs. Invite them into your process and humbly ask for their feedback.

Finish One Song

Often we can get stalled out on a single idea, and live with a multitude of fragments that never get done. Just finish one song. Throw perfection to the wind and live with that one thing you can make as a whole. Put away your editing hat for another time.

Use Other Songs to Write

Take an old hymn text, and write a new progression and melody with those words. Take a favorite song and use everything but the words. You will write something new and you can use this exercise to shake you out of the ruts that come with writing.

Have Fun

If you aren't having fun, you aren't doing it right. Delight in the Creator as you write, and enjoy the labor of creative work!



RESOURCES

Theology of Worship

- *The Prodigal God*, Tim Keller
- *Delighting in the Trinity*, Michael Reeves
- *Christ-Centered Worship*, Bryan Chappell
- *Worship by the Book*, DA Carson
- *Spirit and Sacrament*, Andrew Wilson

The Worship Pastor/Leader

- *Gift of Being Yourself*, David Benner
- *A Tale of Three Kings*, Jean Edwards
- *The Leaders Journey*, Jim Harrington
- *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Peter Scazzero
- *Worship Pastor*, Zac Hicks
- *Worship Matters*, Bob Kauflin
- *A Body of Praise*, David Taylor

The Liturgist

- *You Are What You Love*, James KA Smith
- *Ancient-Future Time*, Robert E. Webber
- *Ancient-Future Worship*, Robert E. Webber
- *Living the Christian Year*, Bobby Gross
- *Ancient Christian Worship*, Andrew B. McGowan
- *Book of Common Prayer*
- *Worship Sourcebook*