



# PHILISOPHY OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISRY

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## Purpose of this Philosophy Statement

1. To clarify what the Bible has to say about worship so that our ministry can be examined in light of scripture.
2. To ensure unity, effective communication, and continuity from one leader to the next through the use of a written statement.
3. To distribute this statement to everyone serving in the worship and music ministry so that they understand the Biblical philosophy and its implementation.
4. To supplement the job description of the Minister of Worship / Music—any potential candidate should understand and agree to support this statement.
5. To support the Grace Church Elders' responsibility to ensure that our worship and music ministry remains Biblical via periodic comparison of the actual ministry to the stated principles and applications in this statement.
6. To clarify our positions regarding previous decisions of the Elders regarding this ministry that were not clearly documented (i.e. the use of outside, paid musicians).
7. To focus attention on missing ingredients in our historical philosophy that are not currently being implemented.
8. To create a written philosophy statement that can be added to the Church Constitution as an addendum.

## Introduction

To create this philosophy statement, the Grace Church Music Committee has attempted to examine every biblical passage pertaining to worship and music. While there are numerous references to worship and music in both testaments, it is interesting to note that the Old Testament brings to light an emphasis on corporate worship, while the New Testament tends to emphasize personal and private worship. Based on our study of the Scriptural models of corporate worship and the ways the church has historically applied them, we have documented those principles that we can apply to the planning and administration of our own worship services.

## Principle #1

**Because worship is the ultimate priority for the church, the reason man was created, the reason regenerate man was redeemed, and the culmination of history...**

Exodus 20:2-5; Isaiah 43:21; Mark 12:29-30; John 4:23; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 5:13-14

### **Application for corporate worship:**

We need to understand and implement God's design for worship at Grace Church, as follows:

- 1. OT worship was accompanied by reverential awe and fear (bowing down)...**  
2 Kings 17:36; 1 Chronicles 16:25; Job 1:20; Psalm 5:7; 96:4, 9  
**NT worship was offered in fear, awe, and devotion (bowing down)...**  
Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:32-33; 28:8-9
- 2. OT worship included adoration and thanksgiving...**  
Genesis 24:48; Exodus 12:27; Judges 7:15; 1 Chronicles 29:13-14; Psalm 89:1; 92:1,4; 95:6-7; 138:2
- 3. OT and NT worship included obedience and service...**  
Joshua 5:14; 1 Samuel 1:27-28; 15:22; Romans 12:1, 9-11; 14:15,18; 15:15-16; Hebrews 12:28-29
- 4. OT worship included confession that God is right and my sin is wrong...**  
Joshua 7:19; 1 Samuel 15:30-31; 2 Samuel 12:19-20; Psalm 51:15-17
- 5. OT and NT worship included sacrificial acts...**  
Deuteronomy 26:10; 2 Kings 17:36; 1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 29:28; Acts 4:36-37; Philippians 4:15-18; Hebrews 13:16
- 6. OT and NT worship included praise...**  
1 Chronicles 16:9,23-28; 2 Chronicles 29:30; Psalm 29:2; 66:3-6; 71:22-23; 89:1; Psalm 108:1; Hebrews 13:15; Revelation 5:9-13; 15:3
- 7. OT worship included public prayer...**  
1 Chronicles 29:11-20
- 8. OT and NT worship included the public reading of scripture...**  
Nehemiah 8:5-6; 1 Timothy 4:13
- 9. OT worship included musical instruments—strings, winds, and percussion...**  
2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 15:16; 25:6; 2 Chronicles 5:12-14; 7:6; 29:25-28; Nehemiah 12:27
- 10. OT and NT worship included corporate and private singing...**  
Exodus 15:1; 1 Chronicles 16:9,23; Psalm 66:1-2; 71:22-23; 81:1; 89:1; 92:1; 108:1; Mark 14:26; Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16  
*(The following passages are also thought to have been early Church songs: Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13)*

## **Principle #2**

**Because worship is a celebration of God, His works and His character...**

2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 15:16; 2 Chronicles 29:30; Psalm 81:1; 92:4

**Applications for corporate worship:**

Our services should lift our worship perspective up to the level of God, and not down to the level of mankind.

Worship should be full of joyful energy and expression in our music and praise. The music we use must be musically uplifting as well as textually edifying. Stale, dead music does not promote healthy worship.

Music should show newness and creativity and engender the sense of awe and wonder that God deserves.

Our worship should include enthusiastic singing and music accompanied by instruments, voice and JOY!

### **Notes**

*By stale music or worship we mean that which has become so routine and lifeless that the congregation finds it difficult to concentrate on the truth conveyed therein. We need to be creative enough in our design of services and selection of songs and meditations to invoke fresh thinking regarding God's character and nature, yet familiar enough to allow focus on God, not the newness of the material.*

## **Principle #3**

**Because worship is offered solely for God's enjoyment and pleasure, and because He is jealous to receive the sole worship of His creation according to His prescription...**

Exodus 20:4-5; Leviticus 10:1-2; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Psalm 50:22-23; Mark 7:7-9; Romans 1:25-26

### **Applications for corporate worship:**

We need to make sure that each person up front has as their goal performing for an audience of one—God! We must never seek to entertain man.

Because they offer their worship to God, not men, there is no need to applaud individuals or groups who perform visibly in worship services. Besides, many others would also need to be recognized because they also offer acceptable worship behind the scenes—ushers, teachers, nursery workers, custodians, etc

Worship music must have God as the subject, not human beings. When testimony songs are utilized, they should contain a strong emphasis on God's character and should leave the worshipper with a clear picture of God, not man or the individual singing.

Many styles can be used, as long as they are conducive to letting God be the subject!

Battles over music or worship styles miss the point that worship is to and for God. When worship becomes something for my benefit, it becomes idolatry. The style of singing or playing should never draw attention to one's gift or person. We must not draw attention away from God.

Those leading in worship and music should maintain a modest appearance and dress that does not distract worshipers from offering their worship to God.

Because worship is a personal sacrifice to God, no worship task or assignment should be "beneath" someone who is truly serving God.

Our corporate worship services should be set apart from announcements and “business” issues to maintain a clear focus upon God, not man.

Our services should be designed to lead believers to worship God in spirit and truth. They should not be designed as “seeker” services for the lost. The best way to evangelize the lost in a worship service is to present “the real God in all His fullness.” “A profound discovery of God’s reality will subject all one’s personal beliefs and behaviors, priorities and sources of security to serious questioning.” (quotations from “*Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down; A Theology of Worship For the Turn-of-the-Century Church*,” Marva Dawn, pp. 286, 288)

When performance tracks are utilized, they should avoid the use of styles and instruments that draw attention away from God. If possible, accompaniment for vocalists should be live to allow instrumentalists to use their gifts to worship God.

### **Notes**

*Often times terms that apply to music are best understood by musicians. One example is the use of the word “performance.” Let it be known that the word performance is not synonymous with the word “entertainment.” The word performance is the ultimate test and finality of discipline, training and rehearsal. In this sense to a musician, the use of their musical talent in a worship service is a performance. For a believer it is a performance intended for the audience of God, not man.*

## **Principle #4**

### **Because corporate worship had requirements for singers and musicians...**

Training and musical skill—1 Chronicles 15:22; 23:3-5; 25:6-8; 2 Chronicles 34:12b

Set aside for music (Dedication and financial support)—Numbers 8:24-26; Deuteronomy 14:27-29; 1 Chronicles 9:33; Ezra 7:24; Nehemiah 10:39; 12:27; 12:47

### **Applications for corporate worship:**

We should teach those involved in our music ministry the importance of their service and use of their musical abilities.

The heart of a worshiper should not be the only criteria for a musician participating in the corporate worship. There should also be a high level of skill and proficiency attached to the use of musicians in service.

We should create a process to identify vocalists and instrumentalists with musical skill and then train and develop them for service.

Because Scripture supports it, we should also be willing to financially support (when needed) the musicians and music ministry.

### **Notes**

*The use of musicians was an important part of the corporate worship service. They were vital to the worship of the temple and set aside to be free to use their talents in making music. The use of musicians can be a positive and exciting addition to our corporate worship. We should be willing to honor them for their willingness to use the years of study and discipline in assisting corporate worship.*

## Principle #5

**Because OT worship shows organization and excellence in its production...**

Up front vocalists and instrumentalists leading in music—2 Chronicles 29:28

Organized and choreographed services—2 Chronicles 5:12-13; 7:6; Ezra 3:10

**And because acceptable worship should be conducted “decently and in order”...**

1 Corinthians 14:23,26,40

**And because OT worship that was “less-than-one’s-best” was not acceptable...**

Malachi 1:7-10

**Applications for corporate worship:**

We should strive for excellence and always bring the best sacrifice we have to offer.

Worship and Music should be led by people who are adequately prepared and organized.

Preparation, organization and execution of the worship service should be viewed as an act of worship as well. God desires order and excellence as a part of our daily lives and it should extend into our worship services.

### Notes

*There are those who would say the only requirement God has for acceptable worship is the heart we bring to it. For a musician, skill, preparation and excellence are a vital part of the heart that is brought into worship. To offer a sacrifice of praise that falls short of the excellence we (the body) are capable of providing, indicates a heart that is withholding the total worship that God desires. All of our resources, including time, energy, talents and finances should be a part of our corporate worship. It should also be noted, however, that we can go too far in setting a “standard of excellence” that scares others away from developing their gifts for God. We need to balance our passion for an excellent sacrifice with the need to develop new people for the worship ministry.*

## Principle #6

**Because God does not accept worship when sin is unconfessed...**

Joshua 7:19-20; 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 51:15-17; Isaiah 1:11-15; Hosea 6:4-6; Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 5:23-24

**Applications for corporate worship:**

We must not knowingly allow musicians to minister whose lives do not demonstrate personal holiness.

It is each individual’s responsibility not to serve with unconfessed sin.

Bringing “outside” musicians in to assist our worship is not inherently wrong, but should be carefully scrutinized for several reasons:

Only believers worship in spirit and truth.

God does not accept worship when sin is present in the individual’s life.

Every person should be encouraged to use their giftedness and talents to serve and worship God in their own local church where they can be held accountable.

### **Notes**

*There are significant benefits to bringing in outside worship / music participants. For example, second chair instrumentalists, not qualified or comfortable to play on their own, get the chance to use and develop their talents for God. However, the risks associated with not knowing the lives of the outside participants could outweigh these benefits, and accordingly, reasonable effort should be made to determine their spiritual maturity and faithfulness.*

## **Principle #7**

**Because we worship God in spirit (not in a temple)...**

John 4:21-24; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Philippians 3:3; Hebrews 9:24: 10:19-20; 1 Peter 2:5

**Applications for corporate worship:**

We should not be overly concerned with buildings, decorations, and humanly engineered atmosphere to “produce” worship

## **Principle #8**

**Because we worship God in Truth...**

Psalms 145:18; Proverbs 9:10; Hosea 6:6; John 4:21-24; 1 Corinthians 2:14

**Applications for corporate worship:**

Only the regenerate can offer acceptable worship to God.

We should not knowingly allow the unsaved to lead.

We should ensure theologically correct words.

The words (theology) and the music (medium) should be compatible.

## **Principle #9**

**Because corporate worship should be conducted without offence to weaker brothers...**

Romans 14:13-15,18; 1 Corinthians 8:11-13; Gal 5:13-14

**Applications for corporate worship:**

We will strive to be sensitive in our selections of music to avoid needlessly offending some.

We will not elevate the pursuit of “musical excellence” above shepherding people with compassion. The people involved in the church and music ministry must have first priority.

Those leading in worship and music should maintain an appearance and modesty in dress that will avoid temptation to “weaker brothers.”

## **Principle #10**

**Because Christ became relevant to man through His incarnation, and because Paul tells us to be all things to all men,...**

John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22

### **Applications for corporate worship:**

Music should be relevant to the congregation. Relevancy does not equal popularity; it means familiarity. We should use styles and texts that are capable of effective communication, so that the music becomes a tool the people can use in worship, not a hindrance to it. This music should be easily transferable to their daily, personal worship.