



WELCOME

— TO THE —

WORSHIP
TEAM

DANWILT.COM

WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the worship team. My name is Dan Wilt and I'd like to encourage you as you answer the high calling to serve with your church's worship team.

Over the next few minutes I'd like to talk about what it means to be a part of this vital ministry in your local church, and how you can better serve, grow as a musician and leader, and support your leaders, in what God is doing in worship in your community.

We'll touch many practical ideas in 7 areas of your worship ministry involvement that I believe will encourage you and strengthen you as serve.

Welcome to the worship team, and let's get started.

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- 1. THE HEART OF WORSHIP**
- 2. WORSHIP TEAM VALUES**
- 3. SERVING YOUR WORSHIP LEADER**
- 4. SERVING YOUR WORSHIP TEAM**
- 5. SERVING YOUR CHURCH IN WORSHIP**
- 6. BECOMING A WORSHIPPER**
- 7. PRACTICAL THOUGHTS**

WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

THE HEART OF WORSHIP

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Romans 12:1-2 says, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Worship is a whole-life response to the love of God. And our life of worship, as Eugene Peterson calls our “sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life,” can be powered by what happens when we come together on a Sunday morning and sing.

Songs are a place people go to meet with God, and singing together in worship can strengthen us to live out our faith in every area of life.

WHY DO WE WORSHIP?

“We love, because He first loved us,” says 1 John 4:19. The God of the universe started this whole dance of worship. The God who is Creator, King, Trinity, and Savior of the world first pursued us in love, and we now respond.

That’s why we sing. That’s why we rehearse individually and together. That’s why we make music, and put up visuals, and do sound. It’s all because worship is a response to God’s love – that’s why we worship.

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WHY IS WHAT WE DO AS A TEAM IMPORTANT IN OUR CHURCH?

A worship team creates a space for people to encounter God, to engage with His Story, and to meet with God in prayer. A song involves the whole body and mind, and when the body and mind are engaged, often the heart will follow.

People are going through their busy, distracted, and even painful lives saying what the Psalmist said: “When can I go and meet with God?” We say “Here, now; let’s meet with God.” That is a vital role in the life of the church.

Once a suicidal young man came into a worship service, intent on taking his own life that evening. During worship, he was touched by one of the songs, and how much the congregation was experiencing the love of God.

By the time the service was over, he was receiving prayer, and his life was spared.

That’s just one of thousands upon ten thousands of experiences in worship around the world every Sunday. Never doubt that what we do as a worship team is important.

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WORSHIP TEAM VALUES

WHAT ARE GOOD WORSHIP TEAM VALUES?

Consider these 6 worship team values that will keep us focused on what our contribution is all about.

Intimacy – Our job is to make a way for people to meet with God – not to get hung up on how awesome we are. People being close to Jesus is the goal.

Integrity – We should be living the words we are singing, and if we're not, a course correct is needed.

Accessibility – When we look out at the room of worshippers, who do we see? Our goal is to help people who are young, middle-aged, old, healthy, disabled, and new to the church have an accessible path to meeting with God in worship. Forget the show; make a way.

Authenticity/Cultural Connection – We need to be who we are as a church, and as a team. Our sound should connect with the cultural moment we're in, but we still need to be who we are rather than try to be someone we're not.

Kingdom Expectation – If the worship team doesn't expect the Holy Spirit to move on peoples' hearts during worship, who will?

Personal Discipleship – Every worship team member should be attentive to their own walk with God. Everyone needs a mentor, a small group, and someone like a pastor who can speak deeply into their lives.

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WHAT SHOULD A WORSHIP TEAM BE?

A worship team should be a tribe, rather than just a team. A team, like a sports team, is a bunch of players aiming to win.

A tribe, however, is a group of people who share the same values, the same history, the same heart. They play together, but they know they've succeeded when the whole tribe – on the stage and in the room – has come together.

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SERVE YOUR WORSHIP LEADER

HOW CAN I SERVE MY WORSHIP LEADER?

Your worship leader has a calling on their life as much as you do, and it is to lead the community in worship. Ask what you can do to make their life better, their sound better, their leadership better and more effective. Then do that.

There are 5 “Be’s” that can help you remember how to serve your worship leader.

Be at your very best as often as you can – musically, spiritually, and as a friend.

Be in good communication throughout the week you are on. Be responsive to texts and emails, and show up when you’re needed.

Be reliable. It doesn’t matter if you’re an amazing bass player if no one can count on you.

Be attentive in rehearsal, and seek to make the fraction principle work with the team. The fraction principle says that if there are 7 of us on the stage, we each get $1/7$ of the sound. Don’t play more than that unless you have a solo – just do your part, and don’t underplay or overplay.

Be there for her or him. Your worship leader works hard to organize the team and make Sunday happen. Do what you can to lighten the load.

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SERVE YOUR WORSHIP TEAM

HOW DO YOU SUPPORT THE TEAM IN YOUR ROLE?

Galatians 5:22-23 lists the “fruits of the Spirit.” This list is an excellent summary for worship team members seeking to support the tribe.

Love – Show the others you care. Do little things, like tuning someone’s guitar or honoring their request for a higher monitor volume, whenever you can.

Joy – Keep it light, and help laughter happen whether you’re rehearsing or in intense preparation for a conference set.

Peace – If you have an issue with someone, keep short accounts. Go to them before or after rehearsal. Ask forgiveness. Ask how you can do better at serving them in what they do.

Patience – During rehearsal, let others work on their parts without distraction. Don’t mess with your instrument. Instead, support others as they learn their parts and instruments.

Kindness – Be nice. A good friend says life is too short to make bad music. I agree. I also think that life is too short to be snippy, irritating, or unkind. Be nice.

Goodness – Everybody’s probably had a hard week. Send encouraging texts to others, notes, or even give gifts in a way that is appropriate to someone’s need. Help everyone rise together.

WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

Faithfulness – Show up on time. Practice your part. Work with your worship leader’s arrangements. Be reliable as a team member.

Gentleness – You can say what you need to say with grace and respect. When you need to offer some input, make sure you do so in such a way that someone can receive it.

Self-control – Your personal life is not hidden when you pick up your instrument or get behind a sound board. Over time, it speaks. Practice self-control in your private life, and be an accountable person as you give your best as a musician or team member.

WHY IS PERSONAL PRACTICE IMPORTANT?

Practice is for the person, and a rehearsal is for people who have practiced. Rehearsal is not a time to practice your part.

When everyone comes to a rehearsal ready to go, having listened to the music and having worked on their part, the music comes together quickly and rehearsal time is effective.

PERFORMANCE VS. WORSHIP LEADING

A performance caters to an audience. A worship team serves a congregation. There’s a big difference. Yes, we need to execute the music well and cleanly. But we also need to engage in worship personally so we are in sync with our whole congregation worshipping together.

Our goal is to help people meet with God. Sometimes, that means the performance of music must step aside in order for us to back off and let the Holy Spirit touch people.

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SHOULD I PRACTICE WEEKLY?

Take an hour or two during the week, and do a few things. First, listen to the audio versions of the songs. Ask your worship leader how close to the originals she or he would like to stay. Then, learn the part in the key you will do it in. Play with the recording like it's a pro rhythm section, and it will help your time.

Stretch your preferred style to match the style of your church's sound. 1970 was 50 years ago – a half century. Styles have changed. Learn new tricks, and serve with your team.

HOW CAN I HELP OUR REHEARSALS TO GO BETTER?

Come prepared for rehearsals, be on time, and make space for everyone to learn their parts. Your part is important, but so are the others.

Be attentive during rehearsal so you hear what's going on. Mark up your music so you can remember which pushes and changes happen where. When in doubt, ask questions kindly and respectfully. Sometimes our tone betrays our attitude from the day's events; do your best to keep things kind and light.

WHAT SHOULD MY ATTITUDE BE AT REHEARSALS?

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, according to Philippians 2. You are there to serve – your worship leader, your fellow team mates, and your church in worship. Make this your attitude check.

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WHY SHOULD I SHOW UP ON TIME?

When one person is late, 20, 30, or 40 minutes of rehearsal time might be wasted. Show up early enough to have all your gear set up and be ready to go at the start time. Don't show up when the rehearsal time begins and then spend 20 minutes fixing your in-ear monitors.

Showing up on time is about respect. Everyone else had things going on in their lives, and they showed up on time out of respect for you. It's so important to return that respect.

WHY DOES MY STAGE PRESENCE MATTER IN WORSHIP?

When we're concentrating on our music, or fixated on the music stand in front of us, it says something. It says, "This is about the music for me. Not worship. I'm concentrating, and my furrowed brow and still body tells you that is true."

Smile every once in awhile while you're playing, and engage your eyes with the congregation. It lights up the room, I'm telling you. It says, "I'm with you in worship; we're together in this, and it's good to be with God."

HOW SHOULD I TREAT OTHERS ON THE TEAM?

Treat others on the team with respect, kindness, and attentive listening. They need you, and you need them. Make it fun to play with you. Be difficult to offend. Be easy to please. It all works together in the end.

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SERVE YOUR CHURCH IN WORSHIP

WHAT SHOULD YOUR ROLE IN CHURCH LIFE BE?

Don't be a green room musician or tech. Be with your team, and your congregation. Be in a small group, be connected to the life of your church. It changes the music and the dynamics of the team.

When you're not on, come to church. And when you come, engage in worship. Don't sit back and watch. Your community needs you to be a Christian more than they need you to be a musician. Dig in, love, be loved, and serve.

HOW CAN YOU PRAY FOR THE WORSHIP LIFE OF YOUR CHURCH?

Pray that your congregation would move forward in their experience of God in worship. Pray that they would enter the songs, and the songs would enter them. Pray for God to touch people in your congregation as they worship.

HOW CAN YOU SERVE YOUR CHURCH'S VISION FOR WORSHIP?

Learn what the vision of your church is for worship. Ask the worship leader. Ask the pastor. Get to know the vision and mission statement of the church. Then translate that into the part you play in worship and in the congregation.

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BECOMING A WORSHIPPER

COMMITMENT, CHARACTER, AND CALLING

Commitment means I do what I say I will do. Character means that I am walking in faithfulness, perseverance, courage, purity, and trust in my daily life. Calling means that you have been invited by God to participate – it's not a right, it's a privilege.

HOW CAN I NURTURE THE HEART OF A WORSHIPPER IN MYSELF?

Spend time with your instrument privately worshipping every week. If you are meeting with God on your instrument in private, it will literally change the sound of the music you play in public.

HOW CAN I LIVE AN AUTHENTIC WORSHIP LIFE ON AND OFF OF THE STAGE?

When Jesus said He was looking for worshippers who worship in spirit and truth in John 4, he meant that He was looking for people who are the real deal. They don't just talk about loving God; they do it. They don't just talk about loving people; they do it. They are soft-hearted, always looking to grow, and always wanting to worship and help others to do the same.

WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

HOW SHOULD YOU HANDLE CONFLICT?

If you have conflict with someone on the team, pray for them and for your relationship first. Second, if needed, go to that person with humility and seek to make it right, at the first possible opportunity. Then, if that doesn't work or it's still difficult, bring in someone else you both respect.

Confidence without arrogance; humility without apology, honesty with kindness. That's what your team members need from you.

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU SERVE IN THE BAND?

Your local worship team may have time limits for how long you should serve on the team. I would suggest that you take a break once every year or two just to make room for anyone else God may be wanting to raise up in your role. It's good for our souls for us to step on and off the stage, because it keeps us from clinging to our role. A servant, without a role, is still a servant.

WHEN IS IT TIME TO STEP BACK?

If you're getting tired, or starting to feel cranky about little nit-picky things in the worship ministry, it might be time to take a break. God may want to utilize you in a different way for your own health, and to give someone else a chance to serve.

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WHAT ABOUT MY GEAR AND GROWTH?

I think it's important to keep your up and current, so that you can keep serving with equipment that isn't breaking down or not sounding the way it needs to.

Also, keep taking lessons. We're never too old to get better at what we do, and to learn from others. We can learn from YouTube, from recorded musicians, from people who are better than us at what we do, and from one another.

Be a lifelong learner, and bring it all as your offering in worship to Jesus.

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CONCLUSION & BLESSING

Being on the worship team is a great privilege. I bless you to stay steady in your own walk with Jesus, your own worship life, and your own servant-life in your church and in the worship team.

Remember, God is not asking for perfection – just devotion and faithfulness in the little things. Enjoy your time in the worship team, and give your very best to see Jesus made famous in your community.

Take care, and live strong!



WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

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TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

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TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

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WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

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WELCOME TO THE WORSHIP TEAM

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ABOUT DAN WILT

Dan Wilt, M.Min. is the founder of DanWilt.com and WorshipTraining.com, and has served as a university Worship Arts & Spiritual Formation educator and seminar leader for over 20 years.

He has led undergraduate and graduate students in rich explorations of the full-hearted life, and what worship means in every generation. His passion is to see disciples of Jesus grow a sustainable faith – for a lifetime of wonder in worship and life, and for passing on to generations to come.



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