

A Model for Praise Services

Praise has gotten so difficult stylistically as to cause churches to split. Here is a model that approaches many styles but always comes back to rest in real worship. This model for praise services incorporates many worlds of music but has one single goal – collecting different generations for worship. Worship here is defined as that which the Holy Spirit energizes through the people. It is effortless, quiet and reverent as opposed to praise that is often loud and effort-filled as we sacrifice the fruit of our lips. If we understand that the ultimate worship is silence, an awe at the presence of God -- “I fell at his feet as though dead,” “I am undone” etc. we have a better understanding of where we are going.

We Begin with –

I. A fast chorus of Invitation to the service and participation –

“Stand up and glorify the Lord”

“I will enter his gates”

“Come and let us go”

“It’s time to praise the Lord”

Just because you have bodies in church doesn’t mean you have brains and hearts prepared to praise. Style is irrelevant to speed here. Since it is hard to make a service more exciting than its opening, the first song should invite all to participate and be simple enough that your visitors can catch it on the second time through. It should bring the audience to their feet.

II. Now there is room for something rocky, contemporary, country, southern and still rather fast and upbeat. Two of these are all that is needed woven together as seamlessly as possible.

III. Hymnal. We cannot get away from the need for hymns not only because of older saints but because hymns are theological rather than emotional. Choose one or two. The second should be quieter than the first. Accompaniments should be coming into more traditional frameworks – piano organ, etc. Kill the synth, quiet the drummer and the distortion pedals!

IV. Seamlessly go to a worship chorus. (seamlessly meaning that a good accompaniment Gospel pianist should play a quiet segue to the next key and be there when the worship leader wants to start. This should be quiet enough for the worship leader to speak over it and encourage the people.

If possible make it one they can sing from memory. The last thing we need here is for people to have to read. Give them the opportunity to close their eyes while singing.

“Hallelujah”

“He is Lord”

“There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

“Holy Spirit, Thou Art Welcome” etc.

This part may be followed by special prayer, conviction (even a rare altar call), tongues, and prophecy, etc. Of course all services will not lead to tongues or prophecy, but there should be a manifestation of God’s presence felt by all or worship has not met its goal. Thus the word manifestation as used here refers to the manifest presence of God in many ways. Too many worship leaders do not know when the course of worship is ending and prolong this moment rather than realize it is a means to *another* end.

V. (Optional) Depending on the heaviness of the service, you may wish to go to a second worship chorus or bring the first chorus down to an unaccompanied rendition. Now you have the beginning of the opportunity of individual worship. Remember that if it takes too long to produce this effect, all you will have is tired, standing people. Remove doublings (second song in a section) to shorten the praise section, if necessary.

In a very short amount of time your people will begin to anticipate the worship section and unconsciously move toward it. Alterations can be made in length of time based upon audience participation. End this section with prayer to give the congregation a sense of closure.

“Lord we thank you that you are here. You have come among us. You have bent the heavens low. We sense your presence. Thank you. As we come into your presence, prepare each heart to receive from heaven the things they need to grow in you. We know you have come to make a wonderful difference in our lives. Amen”

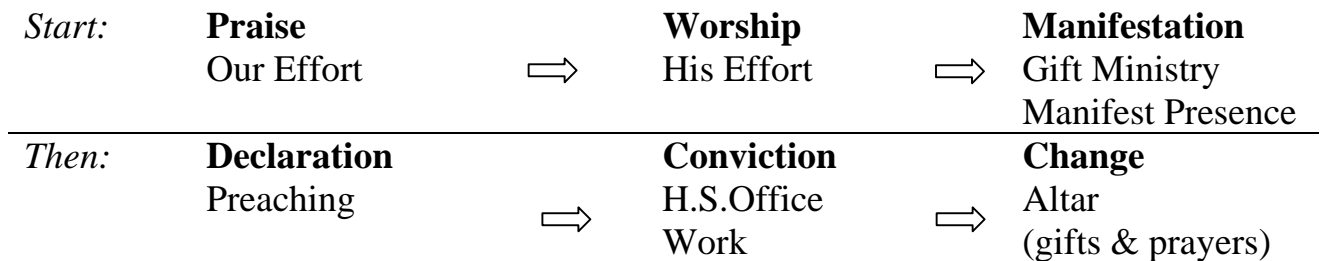
“You may be seated.” “Thank you for participating in our worship service,” goes a long way toward cutting the service into understandable segments.

DO NOT take up offerings or make announcements at the end of worship without closure lest you confuse your people into thinking that worship is to induce money or participation. Move announcements, and specials to a place before or behind this so that the sections may work as a unit.

Do NOT confuse I - V with selections by a choir, soloist or group. Individual musical offerings need to be a separate part of the church service. Occasionally a special may enhance this time, but it must be chosen with care and delivered without delay. Waiting for someone to walk to the platform, start an un-cued tape, get a noisy mike, etc. breaks this moment quickly. Remove the impediments!

Remember, when a man or woman comes before the Great King, it is in a posture of humility and awe. It is the exact posture of the altar service. Thus, everything must go toward bringing the people into the throne room of God.

God’s route to bring the people to the throne is—



In this model everything builds toward the goal of growth in the saints and that is why we are in the business.

God Bless!

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