

Tim Price, Harvest

Kingdom Stuff: growing the church, reaching the next generation, effective leadership

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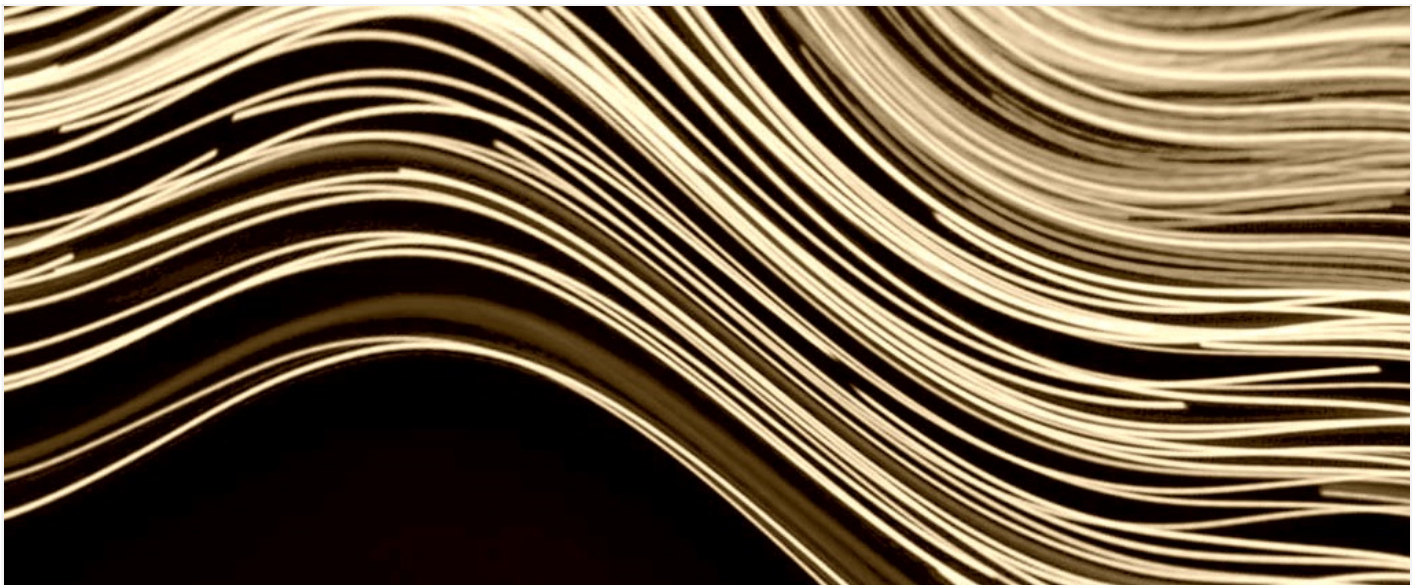
5 Foundational Components Creating Great Flow In Worship

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 by Tim Price |  posted in: MINISTRY LEADERS, Uncategorized, WORSHIP MINISTRY |

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We've all been there when the flow has been great during worship.

Components seemed to work together, people were ready when time came, songs fit, the message clicked and it all worked well. On the flip side, as Chris Tomlin once quipped, there are times when "Flo" doesn't show up. The components seem disjointed and things are a little jagged.

The dots don't connect.

Worship is an action on behalf of the participants and is intended to be done in spirit and in truth. And I know there are times when powerful things happen even though worship leadership components were really disorganized. I also know there are times when it seems like it was really powerful according to our planning, but it just came across as an average day.

I understand that worship is what each participant gives individually and what the whole church gives corporately. But great flow helps limit the hindrances. Great flow helps build bridges. Great flow can bring inspiration and encouragement. Great flow can help people enjoy worshiping. And it's our job as worship leaders to do everything we can to encourage good flow among the leadership and the worship service itself so people can experience and worship God! Here are 5 foundational pieces that help accomplish great flow during every worship gathering:

PREPARE

Preparation for flow begins right now. As you are reading this you are either learning about flow for the first time or reminding yourself of the importance of it. You are preparing. Stagnate flow may be as bad as no flow at all. If you get into a rut, you have trouble offering fresh new ways to encounter God presence and worship. [[read: the difference between a groove and a rut](#)]

Taking some time to prepare yourself to think about flow is a great step.

Preparation involves prayer. If you don't feel like there is great flow in the worship service you lead, begin praying now that God will use you to be the agent of change. Pray for the worship service, pray for the people involved and pray for powerful results as you begin planning and practicing flow.

You can also prepare by taking note of flow in worship. Evaluation is one key to this. Discover through observation and conversations the places where the worship service you lead flows well and where it is disjointed. For example, do people coming forward to participate in worship components such as reading the scripture know when they are to walk up, or do they wait to be announced? There are ways to help improve the physical flow of the service components and the best way to prepare for change is to pinpoint where you are through evaluation.

PLAN

Planning requires pen and paper (or mouse and keyboard). To plan, you must begin to take notes, write things down and get a system for worship planning. It's the job of the worship leader to help arrange the meetings, the systems and the way the church plans for worship. Become a team with your pastor as you plan. Writing out the worship order helps you visualize how the flow will go. Planning ahead gives you time to let the dust settle and to think creatively about flow in the worship service.

Planning allows you to determine a new way of approaching the worship order to keep things fresh. Plan songs to help people enter the presence of God. Here are some thoughts on song lists: 1) Keep song keys in mind – typically, it's good to go down in keys through the course of the worship service 2) Keep the story in mind – it's good to sing songs that proclaim God's attributes as you begin, then move to songs that begin to involve our response (songs that typically begin with "I") Additionally, keep the songs familiar enough for people to sing loudly. Don't introduce more than one new song at a time. 3) Keep in mind tempos – typically tempos will help set the stage for moving from celebration to reflection and from praise to worship.

Planning may also happen a few minutes before the worship service. Examples might include, "when you're finished singing, can you move the pulpit over here" or "after the third song, let's have a seat in the back during the welcoming of the new members and baptism." Those little technical conversations go along way to increased flow on the platform.

PRACTICE

Practice flow. As a worship band, one of the best things you can do is to run through transitions between songs, Scripture, drama, video and other components. One aspect we are always trying to make smooth is communion and how the band receives it. We practice it. Practice also applies to tech, timing, video and lighting cues and sound details. This also applies to new components – new lighting or new stage design. Practice working in it and around it. Practice how the song will fade, who will read scripture or intro the next song, who will pray, and how the service will end. Flow happens best when everyone knows what is supposed to happen. Practice also means experimenting – Did it work for people to sit down before the last song, or did they have to stand right

back up? Was the person who prayed able to get up to the mic ok? How is the best way to welcome – should we speak before music begins or just jump in? These question and others just like them are different for every church. Trying it out a couple different ways is totally fine.

BE PURPOSEFUL

Most of the flow components deal with being intentional. Whatever you are going to do, do it on purpose. Follow the plan and the practicing to optimize what you are trying to accomplish. There are times when the preacher is great with flow and will sort of direct the service verbally as it goes along. This can be effective for a congregation up to a certain size, then it needs to shift. At some point, more people are involved, there are more leaders in the worship band and more volunteers involved in helping the service happen through tech, media, drama, etc. We need to make sure each component is carefully thought out. Do what you do on purpose.

BE PERSONAL

One of the best ways to encourage great flow in worship is to live it out. Is Sunday game day for you? Are you utilizing the week to prepare for and looking forward to Sundays? Do you take it upon yourself to get a pulse on where your worship team is in regards to flow? Are you allowing yourself to grow in learning about flow? You need to be comfortable leading people and providing opportunity for good flow to happen. You don't have to be a showman, but in humility, confidently use the God given gifts you have and are growing in, to step in to the sacrificial space of worship leader – helping to nurture the church in this pastoral role of leading.

Another aspect to great flow is to know and love the congregation. You may be doing these songs over and over, but remember your congregation only sings them once or twice to your twenty times.

Lovingly lead them, care for them and grow in your compassion from the stage.

Finally, good flow doesn't mean being a robot or a task master. It's all about helping to decrease hindrances. But we're all human and sometimes there are snags in worship flow. I have found that when we are able to be human on stage with a mistake here and there, people

respond. I remember a time a couple years back when I was teaching our congregation “10,000 Reasons” and I hit the first chord and froze. I couldn’t think of the melody whatsoever. And I sat there trying to remember it, all while interjecting some comments here and there trying to overcome the awkward 45 seconds or so. I had so many warm comments, connections and smiles over that moment that lasted two or three Sundays!



Jesus is the ultimate worship leader and our job is to be connected to Him. When we are personally worshiping Christ through prayer and devotion we begin to discover joy in leading others in excellence.



Blessings on your church! I’m praying for your leadership in this role of worship ministry.



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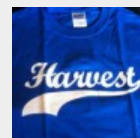
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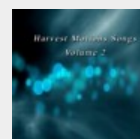
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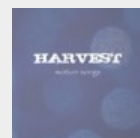
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