

How to Lead The Worship Service

Question 1: What is the purpose of the worship service?

- Together, as God's family we want to sit at the feet of Jesus in worship and give Him our full attention.
- It should lead all the people into the presence of God, so that He may communicate with everyone.
- The worship service is not a performance – with actors and an audience. God wants to interact with everyone present – even unbelievers – everyone should participate.

Question 2: What are the important parts of a worship service?

- Use the model of the Lord's Prayer to help you plan your worship service.
- In this way, your private times of prayer, your "foot washing" group and your church worship service will all be connected.
- Here are the 6 parts of a worship service:
 - Preparation
 - Praise
 - Prayers asking for help
 - Prayers asking God to provide for our physical and spiritual food.
 - Offering
 - The Word of God
 - Prayers asking for forgiveness.
 - Prayers asking for deliverance and protection.

Question 3: Preparation: Jesus said: "When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in secret..." We need to make some preparation to meet with the Lord. It is very helpful to spend a few minutes at the start of the worship service to help people prepare their hearts to meet with the Lord. What are some things you do to help your people prepare for the worship service?

- I sometimes ask a small group to prepare a song or get the whole church to sing together.
- I often arrange for someone to play a musical instrument – this helps people to settle down and prepare for worship.
- I will lead in a prayer, calling the people to worship.
- Here is an example of a prayer to help people prepare for worship:
 - Father, this next hour is very special. We want to sit at your feet and listen to Your voice. You know us Lord – so often we find it difficult to hear Your gentle voice. There are so many distractions. Please help us to focus our attention on you. Holy Spirit – please come and help us to worship the Lord honestly and wholeheartedly.
- Here is an example of a poster displayed in the church to help the people prepare for worship as soon as they arrive:
 - Welcome to Wesley Methodist Church. We hope that you will discover more of God's love and His purpose for your life. Here are a few suggestions to help you prepare for this worship service:
 - Please switch your hand phones to the silent mode.

- Think of one or two people or things that you are thankful for – thank God for them.
- If you are worried about anything, tell your Heavenly Father everything that is troubling you.
- Ask Your Heavenly Father to speak to you and the rest of His people during this service.

Question 4: Praise: “Our Father in Heaven – Your Name is Holy!” The whole church should be guided to praise the Lord together. What are some things you do to lead your people to praise the Lord?

- I lead the people gently – there may be church members who are facing many problems and do not feel like praising the Lord.
- It brings our Heavenly Father great joy when His children praise Him even when they are in trouble.
- I usually select one of the 7 basic beliefs of the Christian faith to guide me as I lead the people to praise God.
- I carefully choose 3 or 4 songs of praise and teach my members to sing them from memory. If the church can dance together to one or two of these songs – that will be wonderful!
- I sometimes ask one or two members to share a short testimony or lead in a prayer of thanksgiving – but I get them to write it out or share with me first in private.
- Here is an example of a prayer of praise:
 - The Lord Is Our Shepherd. Heavenly Father, thank You for being our shepherd. You understand us completely. You know our strengths and our weaknesses. You urge us forward and lead us down new paths of challenge. You know when we are tired and in need of rest and refreshment. As we place our lives into Your hands, we thank You that You will help us find a proper balance. You will teach us to work hard and rest well.

Question 5: Prayer Asking for Help: “May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” What are some things you do in your church to help them ask God for help?

- I guide the church to pray for themselves, their families, their friends and their colleagues at work.
- I lead them to pray for our church concerns (people in need or important events in the week ahead) and the leaders of my country.
- I carefully choose 3 or 4 songs which express our cries to the Lord asking for His help and deliverance. I teach my members to sing them from memory.
- I ask the Lord to come again to earth and establish His Kingdom of Righteousness.
- I conclude with the Lord’s Prayer.
- After prayer, we welcome visitors and wish one another God’s peace.

Question 6: Prayer asking the Lord to provide for all our needs: “Give us this day our daily bread.” What do you do in your church to collect an offering?

- We need physical bread to feed our body.

- The church should take up an offering to help support the pastor, the work of the church and those in need.
- I appoint two responsible church members to take charge of the collection of the offering. (For more ideas, go to the chapter entitled “All about Money”)
- I often involve the children in the collection of the offering – but each child is supervised by an adult.
- Before the offering is taken, someone will explain the purpose of the offering and lead in a short prayer. The same words are repeated every week:
 - The Bible teaches us to share what we have with needy and to support the work of His kingdom. This is a discipline for all Christians. Those of you who are visiting us do not need to contribute.
 - Lord, everything we have belongs to you – we offer these gifts and our whole lives to You. We are grateful for all that You have done for us.

Question 7: We need spiritual food to feed our spirits. What do you do in your church to teach the Word of God?

- There should be a short reading from the Bible. (Select a few good readers and train them to read the Scriptures well).
- I teach the whole church to memorise a few important Bible verses and the 7 basic beliefs of the Christian faith by declaring it together. The last chapter of this manual summarises all the memory work.
- The Word of God is clearly explained for all to understand.
- I carefully choose 3 or 4 songs which express our desire to hear His Word and offer our lives in obedient service to the Lord and teach the church to memorise them.

Question 8: Prayers asking for forgiveness: “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” What do you do in your church to lead your people to confess their sins?

- The preaching of the Word often throws light on our sins.
- I guide His people to confess their personal sins to the Lord – for the wrong they have done and the good they have not done.
- I remind them not to hold on to any bitterness or resentment.
- I lead the church in asking the Lord to forgive the sins of our own community and country.
- At least once a month, I celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion with the church.
- I carefully choose 3 or 4 songs which express these prayers of confession. I teach the church to memorise them.

Question 9: Prayers for Deliverance and Protection: “Help us not to give in to temptation – Deliver us from the evil one.” What do you do in your church to help them in the spiritual battle?

- I remind them of the spiritual battle that is raging all around us – I invite them to come forward for prayer or remain behind after the service and approach one of the leaders.
- I guide them in praying for strength to resist temptation.
- I ask God to deliver us from the evil one.

- I teach them to memorise 3 or 4 carefully chosen songs which remind us of the spiritual battle.
- I send them forth with a prayer of blessing for God's protection and peace.

Question 10: I do not like the idea of using written prayers – why can't I just depend on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? I prefer to be natural and not depend on a written script.

- It is true that we should always allow the Holy Spirit the freedom to help us pray more effectively and creatively.
- Written prayers are not intended to restrict that freedom.
- They have been used for thousands of years to help the people of God to learn to pray consistently in private as well as in public.
- The Psalms are the best example of this.
- Our songs of worship are also written prayers.
- Many times when I am by myself – I do not feel like praying. I am too tired to compose a prayer. My heart is cold.
- In those times, I just read one of the Psalms or one of the written prayers which I use in church, or I sing one of the songs of worship.
- And do you know what happens? Gradually the Holy Spirit begins to lift my heart in worship.
- My heart, which only a few moments ago felt so cold, becomes warm and alive with love for our Lord.
- There are days, however, when I do feel full of the joy of the Lord.
- On those days my heart is overflowing with praise. My prayers are like a continuous stream.
- On such days I put aside the written prayers and enjoy the freedom of worshipping God in the fullness of His Holy Spirit.
- Written prayers are very important to strengthen both private and public prayer.

Question 11: But what happens if some of my church members have difficulty reading?

- Repeat a few prayers and songs week after week – your church members will soon be able to memorise a few important prayers and songs.
- This is why I carefully choose only a few songs from each different type of prayer and repeat them over and over again.
- If you keep singing new songs every week, your members will not be able to memorise anything.
- After the church has memorized the specially selected list of songs from each type of prayer, I introduce new songs slowly.
- But I still keep repeating the old songs so that the new comers will also be able to memorise them.
- The memorizing of songs is very important because it helps my members to worship the Lord on their own.

Question 12: How long is your worship service?

- There is no fixed rule about this – but I aim for about one hour.
- It is better to be too short than too long.

- It is much better that your members go away thinking, “I wish we could spend more time in worship” – than for them to say, “the worship service is so long and boring.”
- Very long services discourage new people from joining.
- Watch your people as they worship and when you are preaching – notice if they are paying attention or not.
- Select a group of 3 or 4 persons to give you regular feedback about the worship service. Change this group every six months.

Question 13: What does your order of service look like?

- Preparation (2 mins)
- Praise (10 mins)
 - Songs, Reading of a Psalm, testimony, prayer of praise
- Prayer asking for Help (6 mins)
 - Prayer Song, Pastoral Prayer, the Lord’s Prayer
- Welcome and Church Concerns (3 mins)
- Memorising the Word (3 mins)
 - The Nicene Creed or Scripture Verses
- Offering (4 mins)
 - Prayer before offering
 - Collection of Offering
 - Song of Offering
- Preaching the Word of God (22 mins)
 - Song preparing us to listen to the preaching of the Word
 - Scripture Reading
 - Sermon
- Prayers of Confession (5 mins)
 - Reflection on what has just been preached.
 - Prayers of Confession
 - Song of Confession
- Prayers for Deliverance (5 mins)
 - Prayer for victory over temptation
 - Prayer for deliverance from the evil one
 - Song of Deliverance
 - Final Prayer for the Blessing of God’s Protection and Peace

Memory Work

- Select or compose two songs from each type of prayer and teach your church to memorise them.
 - Songs of Preparation
 - Songs of Praise
 - Songs asking for Help
 - Songs asking God to speak His Word to us
 - Songs helping us to confess our sins
 - Songs asking for Protection and Deliverance

Don’t miss this part

- Select a small group (3 or 4) of your members and teach them this lesson.

- Ask them to meet with you for about 15 minutes after every worship service for 6 months.
- Together answer the following questions:
 - What did the Lord say to you during the service?
 - Were the newcomers warmly welcomed? Did they find the service helpful?
 - Do you have any suggestions to make next week's service better?