

# Worship



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## **Leader's Guide**

*How to use "Worship" by BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS in your regularly scheduled meetings.*

*BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS is not another program. You don't have to build a program from scratch or take another night to be out. BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS works when you want it to, where you want it to, the way you want it to. It's completely flexible and designed to be easy to use.*

*You probably already have regularly scheduled meetings with board members or with other committees or groups of leaders. BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS fits easily into what you're already doing. Here's how to use BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS at the beginning of a board meeting or committee meeting:*

**1. Select a learning tool.** In this theme of "Worship," you'll find multiple types of handouts from which to choose:

- ◆ an interview
- ◆ case studies
- ◆ how-to articles
- ◆ assessment tools
- ◆ devotionals

**2. Select a handout.** You could select one of the two assessments in this theme: "A Checklist for Song Leaders" (p.5) or "Does Our Worship Add Up?" (p. 6). From these options, select the one that best fits what you want to accomplish.

**3. Photocopy the handout.** Let's say you selected "A Checklist for Song Leaders" Photocopy as many copies as you need—you do not need to ask for permission to photocopy any material from BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS (as long as you are using the material in a church or educational setting and are not charging for it).

**4. Prepare for the discussion.** We recommend you read the Scripture passages and identify key discussion questions. How will you apply the principles to specific decisions your church is making?

**5. Lead the discussion.** Most handouts can be read within 5 minutes. After you have allowed time for reading, begin the discussion by asking one of the provided questions. Be ready to move the discussion to specific issues your church is facing.

Most BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS handouts can be discussed in 15 or 20 minutes. Your board, committee, or team will still have plenty of time to discuss its agenda.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at

[www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com).

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## What It Takes to Worship Well

*Pleasing God with our praise.*

Psalm 94:14; Isaiah 6

*In this interview, Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in midtown Manhattan, New York, reflects on the “learned skill” of worship that pleases God.*

### Is worship doing what comes naturally? Or is it a skill that must be learned?

*Tim Keller:* Worshiping God is an instinct that’s gone awry. As a result, it must be learned, but as it’s learned, it feels utterly right and natural.

Worship is pulling our affections off our idols and putting them on God. Obviously, at our deepest level, we were created for worship. But rediscovering that takes skill. It’s learned.

### When you strip away all of the externals, what is corporate worship?

Individuals worshipping God in harness. Each horse, say, in a team of six horses is affected by the speed and direction of the other five. The same is true of worship.

Worship is treasuring God: I ponder his worth and then do something about it—I give him what he’s worth. Every brand of worship must have those two elements. Public worship just means you’re doing it in concert with others.



**Tim Keller**

*“Aesthetic excellence in worship is an effective means for people to grasp the truth about God.”*

### So when has a congregation worshiped well?

When a large number of those attending the service are privately worshipping, seeing God for what he’s worth and responding in kind. A poor worship service is one in which very few are.

Unfortunately, there’s no tangible way to tally the percentages.

### Some people are moved to tears by listening to “The Old Rugged Cross,” others by “The Wind Beneath My Wings.” Is that worship?

Perhaps. But it could also be merely a sentimental connection. That is, the song reminds you of a warm memory

### So an emotional experience may not be worship.

Correct. Feelings—perhaps induced by my surroundings or whatever—are stirred, but there is no impact on my whole life. Our emotions become a legitimate part of worship when, in response to a truth about God, we give something back to God: our money, our sin, our praise.

However, if I leave Sunday morning having had no emotional connection whatsoever, I haven’t worshiped. I must allow my heart to be touched.

### What role should aesthetics play in worship?

Aesthetics, or art, is a movement from the right brain to the left. Clearly, people are brought to faith through great aesthetics. The power of the art draws people to behold it. After a while they begin to wonder if the ideas that inspired it are true.

That’s one reason why large churches that focus on excellence in worship attract more

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non-Christians. A non-Christian is attracted to the art of a tight-sounding worship band or string quartet.

**Is the reason for good art in worship because God deserves our best?**

That's one reason. But, frankly, I doubt that to God there's much difference between the classically trained soloist or Brother Joe's nephew. Even our most highly trained musicians are probably not going to impress Almighty God. ➤



## **What It Takes to Worship Well** *continued*

God is the one we want to please, and I doubt he judges on the basis of aesthetics.

Aesthetics are important as an effective means for people to grasp the truth about God so they can give him what he's worth—to worship. Good aesthetics remove the obstacle of distraction that bad art places in the path of the would-be worshiper.

### **Isn't focusing on aesthetics, though, merely catering to our culture's consumer mindset?**

Effective evangelism has usually combined excellent aesthetics with communication. The object is to communicate a message that penetrates the head, the heart, and the will.

### **When you try to be aesthetically appealing week after week, is there a tyranny of each week having to be better than the last?**

The pressure to create an equally good worship service each week can be powerful. I'm an advocate of good aesthetics but not in a way that is harsh. I'm committed to excellence but don't want to make it a non-negotiable. Aesthetics are negotiable, truth is not.

### **How do you arrange your service so people can worship with their mind, emotions, and will?**

We break our service down into three cycles of seeing what God is worth and then giving him what he's worth. Elements of worship such as Scripture readings, exhortations, and sermons are vehicles to show people what God is worth. The offering, prayers of repentance and thanksgiving, and times of confession are there for people to respond to God.

### **To Discuss**

How can we maximize in worship our unique strengths as a church?

Do people require aesthetic excellence to encounter the living God? Why or why not?

What is the role of private worship in a church's common life?

What does Isaiah 6 teach us about encountering God?



## A Checklist for Song Leaders

*Adding power to congregational singing.*

Revelation 19; Psalm 150

*In music ministry, leaders have to keep a lot of things in the air at the same time: spiritual sensitivity, personal preparation, attention to group dynamics, thoughtful song selection, and, among others, full-bodied accompaniment.*

*Here's a mental checklist I use for our congregational singing:*

- 1. Are the songs meaningful?** Every worship leader needs to have the gentle and engaging sense of an educator. When I occasionally introduce a song by briefly describing its history or giving a new perspective on the theme, singing becomes more meaningful for the congregation.
- 2. Am I enthusiastic?** I want to let people know worship is enjoyable. Excitement is infectious.
- 3. Am I appealing to a variety of tastes?** I try to vary my choice of music. Because worshipers speak different musical languages, we give people a variety of ways to express their worship. We avoid an either/or approach to traditional and contemporary music. The simple and spontaneous praise songs can find a powerful counterpoint in the strength and steel of hymnody.
- 4. Am I staying out of a rut?** I want to keep worship fresh and alive. I'll use the metrical index to discover what familiar tunes will fit a new set of words (or vice versa). That's a great way to introduce new material and yet still have enough familiarity that people will participate.  
Periodically, I'll teach the congregation a chorus that's not in the song book. Or we'll sing a cappella. Or I'll sit at the piano, talk a little about the history of the song or tie its theme into the sermon, and then lead them into the song. Or we'll try something visual or dramatic to introduce a song.
- 5. Am I explaining enough but not too much?** The essence of every art is understatement. I don't want to draw the congregation's attention to every clever seam in our program; we want it to appear seamless. Likewise, we don't explain the significance of every song, even though there is one. We let our congregation discover many of the nuances of our worship.
- 6. Am I alert to the emotional energy of the congregation?** I continually monitor how well I'm doing at creating that all-important comfort zone, at capturing and conveying the mood of the music, at funneling our congregation, drawing all of our people into a unified experience of worship.

—HOWARD STEVENSON

### To Discuss

1. How do we balance the need to expand our repertoire with our congregation's need to sing songs they know?
2. How would you describe the mood of our worship services? Upbeat? Somber? Is the mood we create intentional?
3. How could we better capture the spirit of Psalm 150?



## **Does Our Worship Add Up?**

*10 elements to evaluate.*

2 Chronicles 6:18–21; Isaiah 6

*Here are ingredients that hinder or contribute to an effective worship service. Mark a point on each line to describe our worship.*

### **Atmosphere**

Like a funeral parlor ..... Joyful & contagious

### **Music**

Dead ..... Alive & bright

### **Welcome to Visitors**

Visitors ignored ..... Warm & friendly

### **Theme**

No clear theme ..... Theme evident & relevant  
to participants

### **Bulletin/Program**

Like the classified ads ..... Attractive & well-prepared

### **Announcements**

A distraction ..... Blend into service

### **Response**

No opportunity ..... Clear response  
appropriate to message

### **Flow**

Disjointed ..... Each component part of whole

### **Transitions**

Abrupt ..... Clear & easy

### **Language**

Religious jargon ..... Clear & widely understood

—W. CHARLES ARN

### **To Discuss**

4. Which of the above areas is our greatest strength?
5. Which of the above areas is our greatest weakness?

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6. What is one thing we can do next week that will improve our worship the most?
7. How is God pleased by worship that is inviting to its participants?





## Defining Our Worship Style

*How one church found a solution.*

Ephesians 2:14–22; 4:26

**The Case** Several who recently joined the church brought with them their guitars and love of contemporary Christian music and praise choruses. Even though the congregation was a traditional, hymn-singing group, the newer members wanted to use their gifts for the Lord during the Sunday morning service.

When the idea was brought up to the board, opinions were divided.

Some said, “Sure, let’s try it. We could stand to have things a little more lively around here.” Others were dead set against it. Dignified hymns that had stood the test of time were proper church music. Anything else meant the church was giving in to the spirit of the age. Still, a decision had to be made—a decision that had the potential to alienate a sizable segment of the congregation.

**What Would You Do?**

- ◆ What other, unspoken concerns are probably underlying the debate?
- ◆ What biblical principles could inform this discussion?

**What Happened** In our discussion, we tried to stress five things. First, the debate over church music was not new. There was a time when “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” was considered new and radical.

Second, we affirmed that, as a church, we had to remain united because of our identity in Christ.

Third, we emphasized that loving others requires sacrifice and compromise.

Fourth, worship is meant to be a corporate experience: I don’t go to church only so that I can be blessed, but so that others can be blessed as well.

Finally, each congregation has a unique character and can’t be “all things to all people.”

Keeping all this in mind, we decided to incorporate praise/worship music into the worship service twice a month. This was not done to the exclusion of hymns. We committed ourselves to gauging reactions and making further decisions as needed.

So far, the church has lost only a few attenders, and the process, though painful, helped our church identify the “why” of what we do.

—STEVE BIERLY

**To Discuss**

8. How can Ephesians 4:26 assist our exploration into the future of worship at our church?
9. Why are people so much more passionate about worship styles than about most other issues in church life?
10. What kind of corporate dialogue must happen so all in the body feel they have been heard regarding worship changes?



## Adding a New Service

*Balancing unity and mission.*

Psalm 96; 1 Corinthians 9:22

**The Case** “Pastor, we know you’ve been here only a few weeks, but we would like to work with you in starting a contemporary service. We tried to begin something a few years ago, but the previous pastor and the elders said it was wrong not to use the traditional hymns and liturgy. Since that time a couple of families have lost hope and gone elsewhere. We don’t find the present service worshipful and feel increasingly out of place as a young family in our aging congregation.”

The new pastor had known this conversation would come. He himself wanted to see a contemporary worship service but didn’t think it would come this soon.

St. James Church had two identical, traditional Sunday worship services with the adult Bible classes and Sunday school classes between them. The music was led by a part-time organist and 12-member choir—all of whom were opposed to a contemporary worship service.

**What Would You Do?**

- ♦ What counsel would you offer the new pastor and church leadership?
- ♦ What are the issues around which this request should be evaluated?
- ♦ How would you advise those desiring a change to proceed?

**What Happened**

At the next elders’ meeting, the pastor raised the issue: “Several families have asked that we provide a contemporary worship service. Apparently this is not a new request but one I believe we should consider—”

An elder interrupted, “Pastor, we shouldn’t even consider this again. The people asking for this aren’t really committed anyway. Two or three of the families that wanted this ‘other service’ a few years ago aren’t even in the church anymore.”

The pastor replied, “Let’s think about it and consider it again next month.”

During the next few months, the board studied the issue. The disparity between the average age of those actually attending worship and the average of the whole membership—as well as the community—became increasingly obvious.

Somewhat reluctantly, the board compromised by agreeing to experiment with a Wednesday evening service contemporary in style. Initially, the organist was involved with the music for this service, but his opposition increased as the Wednesday worship began to thrive. The new service attracted some young families from both outside and inside the church. The Wednesday evening service continued to thrive, despite opposition, and several years later, when a new Sunday service needed to be added, the board voted to make it contemporary.

—JOCK FICKEN

**What Would  
You Do?**

11. When considering a new worship service, what factors must be considered?  
Tradition? Theology? Familiarity? Schedule? The unchurched?
12. The implementation of a new worship style usually costs more time and energy than expected. What would it cost in our church? What might be the benefits?
13. How does a church deal with the challenge of reaching those “outside” while still ministering to those “inside”?



## Saying “Thanks” God’s Way

*The importance of going public.*

Psalm 100

**Read** *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name (Ps. 100:4).*

**Comprehend** Read through the Psalms, and you discover that thanksgiving is a key component of worship. It seems simple enough. But if you rely on an American understanding of thanksgiving, you will miss something. Biblical “thanksgiving” requires more than saying “thank you.”

Although the Hebrew term *yadah* is often translated “give thanks” or “thanksgiving,” it actually means “to give public acknowledgment.” If your friend Kelly bakes you a cherry pie, the American way to express thanksgiving is to go directly to Kelly and say thank you. However, biblical thanksgiving goes public. It requires you to tell the community of worshipers about Kelly’s act of kindness.

Suppose God opens up the right house for you to purchase. Offers on two previous houses were rejected, but your offer on this latest house is accepted. You feel gratitude. This house will work out better than the first two you looked at. It’s in a better school district, and your payments will be lower. How should you respond to God as a worshiper? Certainly, it is appropriate to pray and thank God for providing the house. But you have not accomplished biblical thanksgiving until you go public; you need to take the opportunity in a worship setting to tell other worshipers how God provided for you.

Leaders who are serious about worship will find ways to incorporate thanksgiving into the church’s worship. God’s people need the opportunity to share publicly what God has done for them. Biblical thanksgiving does not settle for anything less.

—STEVEN D. MATHEWSON

- Discuss**
14. What opportunities does our church provide for worshipers to express publicly what God has done for them?
  15. How can we structure our worship services and/or small group meetings to allow for biblical thanksgiving?
  16. For some people, sharing in front of a group is intimidating. How can we create an atmosphere in which people feel comfortable to share what God has done for them?
  17. What can a worship leader do if the call for worshipers to share thanksgiving is met with silence?



## Praising God ...

... until your last breath.

Psalm 150:6

**Read** *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord (Ps. 150:6).*

**Comprehend** Last words get remembered first. Like the ending lines of a Presidential address or the closing arguments in a trial, the final words of the final psalm in the Bible are carefully crafted. In Psalm 150, the last words concern praise.

Psalm 150 stamps “priority” on this element of worship, which forms the backbone of the psalms. The term *praise* (Hebrew, *hallel*) dominates Psalm 150, appearing 13 times. At the beginning and end, the expression *Praise the Lord* (Hebrew, *hallelujah*) frames the psalm.

To praise means “to boast excitedly.” The word praise describes your response when your child is accepted into her first-choice college or when your corporation is awarded a contract that you pursued. The worship band described in Psalm 150 enables the lively response that expresses praise.

But what about when you don’t feel like praising God?

Psalm 150:6 verifies what a number of the psalms have already argued: *Praise is a matter of life and breath, not a matter of health and circumstances.* Psalms of lament, such as 26, 43, and 59, affirm that life is tough, but God still deserves praise. Psalm 150 reaffirms that by saying: “If you can breathe, you can praise!” True praises will be present even when your life is not going well and when you don’t feel like it.

The Dead Sea Scrolls collection contains copies of several psalms. One of these psalms, though not part of Holy Scripture, grasps the message of Psalm 150:6. Titled *A Plea for Deliverance*, the psalm says, “Only the living may praise you. / Even those who stumble can give thanksgiving.” The only prerequisite for praise, then, is breath. As long as you can breathe, God intends for your life to be like Psalm 150—framed by, saturated with, and dominated by praise.

—STEVEN D. MATHEWSON

- Discuss**
18. What situations in life make praise difficult?
  19. What situations in church life make praise difficult?
  20. How can we help the congregation to praise God even in difficulty?
  21. How could we help our congregation move towards the kind of lively praise described in Psalm 150?



## Making Our Worship Guest-Friendly

*Small changes that can make a big impact.*

1 Corinthians 9:19–23; Psalm 8:9

*It doesn't always take major changes to make a church attractive to guests. A few small changes can make a big difference. Consider the following.*

**1. Room temperature.** *Principle:* Better a little too cool than a little too warm. People who don't like it that way bring an extra sweater. A church is more conducive to attentive worship when it is slightly cool.

**2. Lighting.** *Principle:* Better a little too bright than a little too dim. A bright room sets a bright atmosphere. Always make the room brighter where you want people's attention.

**3. Sound.** *Principle:* Better a little too loud than a little too soft. Public theaters keep the volume loud enough for even the elderly. Watch out for "dead spots" in the sanctuary. It's a mistake to skimp on the sound system when building or remodeling.

**4. Seating.** *Principle:* Better a little too full than a little too empty. If possible, fit the seating for the size of the crowd. A room with more than half the chairs empty says, "They were expecting more, and only a few came." When you add chairs, it says, "They have more than they were expecting!"

But full means allowing for some space between those who don't know each other—85 percent is "comfortably full." (Uncomfortably full is still more attractive to visitors than only 50 percent full.)

**5. Style.** *Principle:* Better a little too contemporary than a little too traditional. Teach the people to "gather to celebrate; be alone to meditate." Do what the Bible says and "sing a new song" to the Lord. Relate more to today's generation than to those of the past.

**6. Goal.** *Principle:* Better a little too healing than a little too cutting. Most auditoriums contain more broken hearts than hard hearts. One pastor told me his ministry began to grow the day he stopped his "Get on the Ball for Jesus" sermons and started preaching "Jesus Can Put Your Life Back Together Again" sermons.

**7. Atmosphere.** *Principle:* Better a little too informal than a little too formal. Informal means warm and relaxed, not sloppy and poorly planned. Aim for excellence without being stuffy. Platform dress makes a loud statement. In our case, the dress is casual contemporary.

**8. Treatment of guests.** *Principle:* Better a little too uninvolved than too threatened. We always give guests permission not to give when taking the offering. Instead we offer them a gift: a cassette tape on love for our first-timers, a paperback Bible for our second-time guests.

—DAVID W. MILLER

### To Discuss

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22. Given our particular congregational culture, how could we adapt the principles to fit our church?
23. When was the last time we evaluated our worship space as a visitor might experience it?
24. What is the biblical basis for making non-churched people feel comfortable in worship?



## Majestic Worship with Modest Means

*Keys to making praise to God genuine.*

Psalm 19:14; Psalm 51:6

*You don't have to be a megachurch to worship God well. Our church, blessed with only modest means, learned that lesson. Here are the values that undergird our approach to worship:*

**1. Authenticity over excellence.** Authenticity isn't an excuse for laziness. Excellence is a legitimate value within the church. It's tough for the congregation to worship when they're squirming because the soloist is embarrassingly flat.

But when we pursue excellence at the cost of authenticity, the church suffers.

Just as a football coach must send in plays the team can run, so the music director must select songs the church can sing. We won't be singing Handel's Messiah any time soon; we enjoy a treasury of hymns and praise songs that are simple, singable, and powerful.

**2. Leadership over musicianship.** It takes a leader to inspire a congregation to enter wholeheartedly into worship; it takes a leader to bring out the best in volunteer singers and musicians. Your church may not have the resources to establish a full-scale orchestra, but if you have a man or woman who loves the Lord, who has decent pitch and tempo, and who can lead people—you have the foundation for a quality music ministry.

**3. Sufficiency over envy.** God has wired some leaders one way and me another way. My God-given passion is to expound the Word to believers. That's my contribution to the Great Commission. I don't have to do it all.

When I realized that, I felt as free as a dog who has been let loose from his yard. I could also let my church be itself. We started to organize our church around our gifts, around the people we had instead of around the people we wished we had. God expects us to give him only "such as we have."

**4. Small church, great God.** What makes for meaningful corporate worship?

While the list of important qualities is long—biblically true, relevant, visual, focused, and so on—only one rises above the rest: *transcendence*.

Transcendence means we come into an encounter with the presence of the living God. Transcendence is what makes a worship service meaningful. The music and preaching and prayers must lead people to God.

Transcendence, at first glance, seems easier to convey in a large, aesthetically-inspiring sanctuary. But it's not a matter of money. Transcendence comes from the content of the worship. It's seeing who God is—and leading people to see themselves in light of who God is.

—BILL GIOVANNETTI

### To Discuss

25. What overlooked resources might we bring to bear on God-honoring worship?

26. What do we do well, even with modest means?

27. Are there aspects of our worship service that might detract from a quality of transcendence?





## Worship by Design

*A guide to service planning.*

1 Peter 2:9–10; Revelation 5:13–14

*Here are five planning practices that can prevent worship from falling into dullness and routine:*

**1. Find the focal point.** I prefer to center worship on a theme. Sometimes the theme is supplied by the season: Advent or Lent or Easter or Thanksgiving. Other times a special emphasis like Missions Month or Family Sunday suggests a worship theme.

The sermon topic is a natural focal point. If the topic happens to be God’s faithfulness, or the love of God, or God’s sovereignty, it is not difficult to blend the hymns, anthem, and spoken word with the sermon.

**2. List resources.** After determining the focal point, I list resources for that theme. First, I turn to four or five hymnbooks by my desk and check the topical index and Scripture reference index. Then I list appropriate worship choruses. Next, I read the Scripture text in several translations. A topical Bible and concordance help me locate related passages that can be used in prayer or during transitions in worship.

Finally, I review the means we have of presenting these items: the spoken word, people who can read interpretively, various musical expressions, and the congregation.

**3. Explore the possibilities.** One principle to remember: The higher the predictability, the lower the impact. So I look at each element of worship from different angles, to see how it might be approached freshly or arranged in creative combinations and yet with dignity.

**4. Remember content and flow.** As the service develops, I look for logical content and emotional flow. We want the content of the songs, readings, and prayers to contribute to the theme. There should be connections—at times overt, at other times subtle—between the different elements of the service.

The service should not be an emotional monotone. I also want to avoid jarring emotional shifts. Worship should flow from one part to another.

**5. Encourage authentic participation.** We need to guard against mere performance.

One way is to use our worship space better. Sometimes I lead worship from the floor of the sanctuary. Or we’ll have people come from the pews to lead a portion of the service. Or we’ll engage the congregation in some way.

We counter “spectatorism” by giving people plenty of opportunities to participate—songs, readings, and prayers. If a person stands from the pews to read a proclamation, in a sense, everyone does it.

—HOWARD STEVENSON

### To Discuss

28. What aspects of our worship planning process are going well?

29. What can we learn about worship from Revelation 5:13–14?



## Creating Our Worship Voice

*How to make Sunday morning more intentional.*

Colossians 3:15–17; Romans 12:9–13

*In an era of cultural diversity, how can one church find and develop its own authentic voice? Our church grappled with this issue. Here's what we learned as we found our "worship voice" changing:*

**1. We tackled the problem head-on.** Our church voice cracked a few times as growth brought changes. Sidestepping the hard choices, however, was not an option. The only way out was through. So we faced the issues—and we faced the music.

Our traditionalists tend to believe that *real* music is at least a century old. Others, who wanted more contemporary music, are just as emphatic. They can act as if music more than ten years old is out of touch. As a result, we couldn't ignore the problem.

**2. We asked ourselves the hard questions.** Should our worship be for churchgoers or the unchurched? What instruments should we use? Should we sing hymns, praise songs, or both? Do we focus on the theological or the relational? The intellectual or the emotional?

Do we use hymnals, bulletin inserts, overheads, slides, faxes or modems? (Who knows what the future holds?) Where does drama fit in? Must age boundaries prevent some from enjoying others' music? How can we deal with passionate people who threaten to leave if we change—or don't change—the music?

**3. We admitted that our culture is saturated with musical options.** With television, radio, cassettes, CDs, and multimedia computers, today's options are an endless musical smorgasbord. Just as people channel-surf to find their music or program of choice, we've found people "church surfing" to see whether our style of worship music fits their preference.

**4. We became intentional, rather than reactive, about worship style.** We surveyed our church to find out, among other things, the music our people listened to. "Classical" and "popular contemporary" tied for first place, "Christian" came next, followed by "country western" and "rock 'n' roll." While we did get some write-ins for "rap," "grunge," and "alternative," a fairly accurate musical profile of the congregation emerged.

We also asked what type of music people preferred in worship. The top vote-getter was "more contemporary music." Then came "more congregational participation." Next came "stay the same," followed by "more hymns" and "more traditional music."

The reality was that we were a congregation with wide and varied tastes. Once we knew what we were dealing with, we began to work toward solutions.

—GARTH BOLINDER

### To Discuss

30. Do we really know what worship style(s) people in our church prefer? How could we find out?
31. Is it wise to tailor our worship to the "church surfers," or to our "own" people, or somewhere in between?
32. What makes music—of whatever style—worshipful?
33. How does our mission as a church affect our choice of worship style?