



GUIDELINES FOR SERVING IN WORSHIP

PSALM 95:1-2 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

Thank you for your willingness to serve! The body of Christ only functions properly when God's people are willing to faithfully step up and serve. In order to better equip ourselves for an orderly worship service, please review the guidelines below for the area in which you are serving. Remember that each element of the service is a part of a bigger picture, and we want all components of the service to intentionally work together.

Some key points that apply to everyone:

- If you are considering doing anything different or unusual, please communicate with the ministry team during the week before the service so that we can plan accordingly.
- Generally, the Friday email reminder that is sent out to those who are participating on stage will include a theme or focus for the lesson. Please consider incorporating that theme into your comments or prayers when appropriate.
- Please sit at the front of the auditorium until your portion of the service is done so that we can minimize the downtime as you walk to the stage. If you are not able to sit at the front for that entire time, please begin moving in that direction during the song prior to your part of the service.
- Make every effort to be at the front of the auditorium by 9:50 for our pre-service "prayer huddle." This gives us an opportunity to make sure each job is accounted for and get everyone on the same page.

Several of the instructions below emphasize brevity. You might wonder why we would want to cut short things which are so important to us, like the Lord's Supper. One reason is that the 10 am service is one of many important activities scheduled in our building each Sunday. Ending it on time allows for fellowship with other Christians who meet at later times and facilitates the transition between activities throughout the day. Another reason is that we want to be intentional with our worship services. There certainly will be times when we deviate from what is outlined below, but we want to make sure that we do that deliberately and in an orderly fashion.

Thank you again for helping us improve the consistency and effectiveness of our worship services by remembering these guidelines.

MICROPHONE INSTRUCTIONS

MARK 4:9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.

For those using the podium microphone (usually everyone except the song leader and preacher):

- It is much better to speak loudly from a foot or two away than to speak quietly from an inch or two away. If you are too close to the microphone, it will produce an unpleasant

popping sound with every “p” that you say, and there is little that can be done about this from the A/V booth.

- Aim for about **12-16 inches** between your mouth and the microphone (that’s about two hand-lengths), and **speak loudly** and clearly.

For those using the other microphones (usually only the song leader and preacher):

- Please **avoid bending the wires**, especially where the wire goes into the transmitter pack.
- If possible, take your phone out of your pocket or put it on Airplane Mode prior to going up on stage in order to avoid unnecessary interference with the transmitter.
- Leave your microphone **on and unmuted**, and let the sound board operator mute or unmute you as needed. In most cases when the microphone is not working, the person on stage has muted himself without realizing it.

CALL TO WORSHIP

PSALM 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, and praise his name.

The call to worship is an energetic welcome to visitors and members, and a tone-setter for the rest of worship. The call to worship will usually be led by the preacher, another minister, or a deacon.

- Although there may occasionally be a brief announcement, this is primarily an opportunity to offer welcome and to introduce the theme of the day, preparing hearts and minds for what follows.
- The person leading the call to worship should **intentionally keep comments brief** and avoid lengthy discourse.

SINGING

EPHESIANS 5:18-20 Be filled with the Spirit as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The song leader functions a lot like a “master of ceremonies” in a worship service. It’s up to you to set and maintain the appropriate tone and energy throughout the service. Be thoughtful and intentional in this. Singing is one of the ways that the entire congregation expresses itself in a unified act. Well-led singing engages not only the intellect, but also the emotions as with one voice we praise the Lord.

- **Lead with confidence!** The congregation expects you to indicate clearly the tempo, character, and other aspects such as verse order or chorus repetition.
- Please **prepare your songs** ahead of time at home. Be sure you know the songs well before leading from the stage. Please ask the office for sheet music and recordings available for at-home practice.

- **Key changes mid-song should in general be avoided**, unless prepped before the song begins, with an advisory comment. If a key change is included, be sure to clearly indicate the modulation with strong vocal/musical direction and some form of hand/arm gesture.
- It is a good idea to double-check with the AV team or church office ahead of time regarding which verses are programmed in the system for the day's service.
- As noted above, please do not mute/unmute your mic pack. This will be handled by the A/V booth team.
- An occasional brief comment highlighting how a particular song fits in with the theme of the lesson can be helpful (keeping in mind the time constraints).
- Prior to the song that follows the offering, **dismiss the children to Kingdom Kids** with a succinct invitation such as, "After coming forward to give their offering, kids ages 3 through 10 are invited to meet your teacher at the door for Kingdom Kids."

PRAYER

COLOSSIANS 4:2-3 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message.

Prayer is a core part of our worship, both individually and collectively. Prayer is not merely a way of punctuating or transitioning through the different parts of a worship service; it is an important and meaningful piece of what we do together.

- **Be thoughtful ahead of time** about your prayer. Although a long, stream-of-consciousness style prayer might be authentic and appropriate in your personal prayer life, it is often hard to follow in this setting and might not be helpful for the congregation.
- Pray from the heart! Whether you are praying extemporaneously, or you have prepared your words ahead of time, it is important to mean what you say.
- Consider how you might incorporate the theme of the lesson into your prayer, when possible.

SCRIPTURE READING

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The Scripture reading is the recitation of a passage chosen by the preacher to prepare listeners for the lesson. This is an excellent opportunity for youth or others with minimal experience to participate and learn to serve on stage.

- Readers should announce what is being read (For example, "Today's Scripture reading will be from Psalm 23, verses 1 through 3"), even though the Scripture reference will usually be on the screen as well.

- It is generally a good idea to confirm with the preacher, prior to the beginning of the service, which text has been chosen in order to avoid any miscommunication.
- The preacher might occasionally ask for a particular version to be used, but most of the time any of the major translations (such as NIV) are appropriate. Avoid uncommon translations or paraphrased versions unless otherwise indicated by the preacher.
- Enunciate clearly and read at an easy-to-follow pace.

THE LORD'S SUPPER & OFFERING

LUKE 22:19-20 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

The Lord's Supper, also known as communion, is a time to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Any comments made by the table leader should be thoughtfully aimed at bringing the congregation to the cross.

- Try to keep it to **five minutes** (including comments and prayers). When the communion time is unexpectedly lengthy, it puts the preacher in a difficult spot, as he then will have to either cut out portions of the lesson he prepared or go over the expected end-time of the service.
- A short anecdote or Scripture reading can be helpful to prepare the congregation for the bread and the cup. However, please avoid lengthy stories or commentary that might derail the plan for the service.
- **Do not bring media (photo or video) the morning of the service** with the intention of displaying it on the screen. We have a complex A/V system, and these things need to be tested ahead of time. Furthermore, it would be irresponsible of us to play a video without reviewing it ahead of time.
- While we do not want to stifle creativity or quench the Spirit, please do not try to "reinvent the wheel" with regard to the Lord's Supper. A brief thought, a Scripture, and prayer is all that is necessary. It is not the table leader's task to come up with a unique, new approach to communion. If you do plan to do anything unusual, be sure to communicate with the ministry staff ahead of time.
- Say a prayer for the bread and another for the cup, with each followed by a brief moment to allow people to open the containers and eat the bread and drink the cup. While we do not want this time to be excessively long, we also do not want to rush through it so fast that people cannot keep up. A brief moment of silent reflection as we take the emblems is appropriate.
- Say another prayer for the offering. Again, a brief comment before the prayer is fine, but keep in mind the big picture and the pace of the service. The tone of this portion of the service should be one of gratitude and celebration, not morosely asking for money.
- The communion leader does not need to dismiss the children to Kingdom Kids, as the song leader will do that prior to the next song.

SERMON

ROMANS 10:14 How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?

The purpose of the sermon is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. All other considerations with regard to the sermon should be viewed in light of this primary goal.

- Sermons should be **biblical**. The congregation should have a clear understanding of what text(s) the preacher is working out of.
- Sermons should be **practical**. The congregation should have a clear sense of the real-world application of the lesson.
- Sermons should be **encouraging**. Although some lessons will certainly confront difficult topics, one of the preacher's main goals should be to build up the congregation.
- Sermons should promote the spiritual growth of the congregation by **challenging** listeners toward deeper faith and greater knowledge of God.
- Sermons should be **accessible**, not requiring an advanced degree or a lifetime of Bible classes to be understood.
- On Life Group weeks, the lesson should be designed with group discussions partly in mind. The preacher should consider what kinds of conversations might be helpful as a follow-up to the lesson and write discussion questions accordingly.
- Generally, the preacher should aim for a **25–35 minute lesson**, with service ending between 11:00 and 11:15.

SHEPHERD'S PRAYER

JAMES 5:16 The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

The Shepherd's prayer is a benediction and send-off to close the service. A central component of the role of an elder is prayer, and it is encouraging for the congregation to be led in prayer by the elders.

- If possible, try to incorporate something from the theme of the lesson into your prayer or in a brief comment before the prayer.
- On occasion, this moment may be used to communicate any urgent or important matters that the elders want to pass on to the church family, but it is **not** a time to read aloud the announcements or Prayer List from the bulletin. Those items are communicated in a variety of ways and generally don't need to be repeated during the service.

