

1. Our worship must be passionate. We must teach and encourage our people to come to church for corporate or community worship “hungry” and “thirsty” for God. We should echo the psalmist’s words in Psalm 42:1 every Sunday, *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.”* And then we must provide an atmosphere and form of worship that is conducive to people who are coming to worship with hearts that are crying out with the psalmist in Psalm 42:2, *“My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”*

We must communicate to our people, over and over again, the message of Hebrews 11:6, that God is the rewarder of those who seek Him and then we must not be afraid to let them do exactly that in corporate worship. We must not be afraid that encouraging our people to seek God on Sunday morning will disrupt the ebb and flow of our service. Rather, we should be cautious that the ebb and flow of our service should not prevent people from seeking God. We must also remember that God is not honored when we worship out of a mere sense of duty. He is honored when we seek Him as individuals and as a community of believers with passionate delight as the greatest treasure and pleasure in life (Ps. 16:11; 37:4; 63:1-5; 84). The danger in not coming to church each Sunday with this attitude of passionately desiring to see and seek God is that our worship will never be God-centered. The passionate pursuit of God in worship is what causes corporate worship to become God-focused and centered.

2. Our worship leaders must understand their role. Those in our church who have been given the privilege and responsibility to lead our worship services must understand that their primary role is to help us see the beauty of the Lord through song, prayer, Scripture reading and other appropriate means. They are also responsible to provide an atmosphere conducive to seeking the Lord and experiencing His presence in our midst. These two responsibilities will require that our worship leaders and musicians use music and songs that are God-centered, God-honoring, and God-revealing so that we might see His beauty and encounter Him during worship.

3. Our worship leaders must know “The Way”. People cannot lead others to where or Whom they have never been. Thus, our worship leaders must know the Lord Jesus Christ and demonstrate this in and through their lives. They must, as worship leaders, be those who prize, cherish, treasure, and have as their greatest pleasure in life Jesus Christ. Their leadership in community worship must be the result and outflow of a life that seeks hard after God. They must know the Way (John 14:6).

4. As worshippers, we must come to church prepared to worship . We must come desiring to see God and to gaze upon His beauty. We must come prepared to then respond from the heart to Him and to cherish, treasure, prize,

and extol Him and His excellencies with all of our heart, mind, and soul. It is absolutely imperative that we not ever lose sight of the truth that we cannot praise whom we do not prize.

5. Our worship must be biblically based and Bible saturated. All that we endeavor to do in our worship services, as well as the content of our singing, praying, welcoming, visiting, ministering, fellowshiping, and preaching must always conform to the Scriptures.

6. Our worship must not be manipulative. We must ensure that the forms of worship we use, while aimed at kindling deep, strong and real passion toward God do not manipulate people's emotions by failing to be based upon and continually appeal to the reason of God's Word.

7. Our worship must be earnest and reverently spontaneous. We must avoid a trite, flippant, and frivolous atmosphere in our worship services. Whereas, we desire to worship in a casual atmosphere, we must avoid casual worship. Instead, we desire to project an attitude and an atmosphere of heartfelt spontaneous worship that is reverent, passionate, and filled with awe and wonder for God.

8. Our worship must be authentic. We must reject and renounce anything that would turn our worship into entertainment. Thus, any actions or attitudes, which seem to be more performance oriented than worship oriented must be rejected and replaced with those that cultivate an attitude and atmosphere of authentic worship in which God and His truth take center stage and thus, are radically and personally encountered.

9. Our worship must pursue undistracting excellence. We will attempt to sing, pray, and preach in such a way that people's attention will not be diverted from the essence and substance of worship by shoddy and unprepared ministry and/or ministers. We will also avoid the distractions of excessive refinement, finesse, over-preparation, entertainment, and forms of worship, which are not indigenous to the make-up of our church family. Natural, undistracting excellence that draws the listener's attention to God must always be the goal of those involved in leading worship. We must follow the example of the Apostle Paul who in his preaching ministry relied upon the power of God rather than his own "cleverness of speech" to minister (1 Corinthians 1:17).

10. Our worship must transcend time. We will pursue a worship music style that is not trapped in a time zone. ***Therefore, we will utilize the very best of historic Christian music as well as the very best of contemporary music in our worship services.***

11. Our worship must not become idolatry. We must, as worshippers,

never allow the form of worship including the music, preaching, atmosphere, fellow-worshippers, and worship experiences, regardless of how intense, powerful, uplifting, and biblical they may be, to become the focus of our worship. The focus of our worship must always and for eternity be God and God alone. To cherish, prize, enjoy, and seek the form of worship over and above the essence and focus of worship is as much an idolatrous act as pursuing a false god. While it is certainly not wrong to enjoy worship and the means and form by which we worship, these must never replace God as the reason why we come together for worship. Thus, the form of worship is always to remain secondary to the essence of worship.

12. Our worship must not become a spectator sport. We must not allow our worship services to become spectator oriented. This occurs when the congregation merely watches and applauds as others worship and/or lead worship. Whereas, it is always edifying and enjoyable to listen to “special music” played or sung by gifted people, our primary goal in our community worship services is to see the whole church body expressing and experiencing worship rather than simply watching it.

13. We must work hard at worship. To prize God above everything else in life does not come naturally to sinful people. Therefore, we must work hard at finding our complete satisfaction in God and Him alone. We must strive against our own fleshly desire to seek our ultimate joy and pleasure in anything other than God. Worship in spirit and in truth is not an easy endeavor. Ultimately, it is God Himself who must work in our hearts to create in us the passionate desire to seek our joy in Him. Worship is hard work because worship is worthwhile work. In fact, it is the only worthwhile work, from which all other work is to proceed and end.

14. We will not fight about worship. We refuse to allow the sweet spirit of fellowship our church enjoys to be hindered, destroyed, hurt, or otherwise interrupted by engaging in battles over music styles and in particular the exclusive use of contemporary music or hymns in our services. It does not glorify God when His people fight over what they believe to be the proper expression of worship to be. Therefore, we refuse to engage ourselves in “the worship wars”.