

I love sharing with other worship leaders. Feel free to email me! I'll give you as much time as I'm able to.

lee@newspring.cc

Priorities as Worship Leaders

We have priorities for our identities as worship leaders. This is what I live by and what we live by here. This comes from 8 years of working, and making mistakes with out of order stuff. Following this is freedom!

1st Priority -> Child of God

As His child, you are irreplaceable. As his minister, you are completely expendable. He will refuse to let anything get in the way of you becoming more like Jesus, His child. He doesn't need you, but he will fight for your heart. Go read Ephesians 1.

Be a Child of God

- Know the Bible
- Have intimacy with God

These two things are of the utmost importance. But spiritual disciplines need to be done at the calling of the Holy Spirit, not because it worked for someone else. You are a unique child of God. Ask God, "How does my face time with You need to look?" He said to me, "Give me two hours. I don't care what you do. Just give me two hours." It has revolutionized my life! But it came because I asked a personal question about how my QT should look. It will be different for everyone because we're all His unique children. How do you and God grow together?

- Maintain your Sabbath

You can sustain long seasons of ministry if you can keep your Sabbath. Keeping your Sabbath comes before murder in the 10 Commandments. So take a day to rest and do whatever good work is in front of you. Sabbath does not mean a day of idleness. Doing no work at all is no good. Look to the Gospel accounts of how Jesus lived on the Sabbath day.

- Seek out Community

Being a leader makes me really lonely sometimes. One thing that I run into is everyone figures you're this leader who either initiates everything or is too busy for anything, and so no one invites you to anything and you're left feeling like no one cares about you. Get people who you can call anytime. Sunday night is sooo important for me. Do community however it works for you. But swallow your pride and call someone. If you don't, it will start a downward spiral, and you're way more apt to fall into sin and darkness.

2nd Priority -> Minister to people, specifically His Church

If you work at a church, your job is to serve the people there. As a worship leader, only one of your pegs is leading songs. This is especially true if you're portable, where interaction is probably 75% of your job. You're doing so much. It's good to be ok with "I'm a minister and part of my job is building His church."

Be a Minister

- Work under authority

Jesus works through the authority structure of your church. When Perry decides to put something in the service, he's never wrong because God has put them in him. In the past, I've been concerned with people thinking I have good taste in music, and afraid they 'd think "he picked that song?!" You have to be like "You're not cool. That's dumb. Get over it!"

Always come to your pastor with humility. If you have a problem with your senior pastor, you may have more of an authority problem with Jesus than with him. You can't doubt God's vision in your senior pastor. So say yes as often as you can. And be proactive with the number of solutions you can offer him. You grow so much in trust in this way. Lift up his hands and his dream.

- Practice your communication

No one speaks more into the people (except the pastor) than you! It's worth your time to think through the words you're going to say. Don't pray cause you need to tune!!! None of us are predisposed to canned prayers. You're there with the microphone...ask God for something! And be authentic. Practice what you're going to say. If you do this ahead of time, God will more time to put on your heart what He wants to say.

- Work hard

If you sit there, you're not living by faith. It's time to take a step! And when God calls, be obedient.

3rd Priority -> Musician and Worship Leader

Romans 12 worship is a lifestyle

Understand what God's definition of worship is. You'll lower your own importance as a musician. For example, tithing is better than singing with hands raised. Leading in that is an even greater worship leader position. If your life doesn't lead worship, you can't call yourself a worship leader. The musical aspects are lower than other forms of leadership.

Be a Musician

- Hone your craft/Be objective

It's sooo helpful to videotape yourself. Listen back to your practice and know what you need to work on. You have the most critical ears...you'll know what you like and don't like.

- Go to concerts

Going to concerts helps you understand what professional level artistry looks like. You receive big vision when you go see that kind of stuff. You find out what being a PRO really means. Professional concerts are a good barometer. And you need to know that you're being a professional too. Dream big! Also, EVERYONE NEEDS TO GO TO U2. Dave Ramsey that piece!!

- Play for the King's pleasure/Be the lead sheep

For the longest time, I thought my voice was a tool. Face the King, and try to get other people to look too. But when you're in the throne room, YOU SING FOR THE KING and it doesn't matter who else is there. You all are awesome singers and musicians because God has given you the gift, so play for the King! He likes it. He gave it to you cause he wants to hear it.

God's desire is for his glory to be demonstrated. Get alone and praise Him...it will affect everything that happens on stage. Build God's dream, and he'll give you the dream you didn't even know you had. Chasing your own thing can be such a snare.

Questions

Q: How do you find balance between your style as leader and styles of your players?

A: Go to God for vision about your sound. For your players, if they can't get out of their personal style, they have deeper issues. What's at stake are the people who come to visit your church who will put up a cynical vibe during worship before even hearing the Word, which is how faith comes. Assess things and think, "Is this a world class moment?" If so, those visitors will be more open for the Word because they'll be thinking, "WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE!?"

Q: When I practice transitions, they feel kind of dry. If I don't practice, I feel like God speaks better.

A: The best thing to do is find out what your church needs. At the end of the day, be objective when you listen to your playback. Did what you said make sense? It might have felt good, but did it sound good?

Q: When do you practice? Do you use a click track?

A: We practice Monday nights. At NewSpring, if you can't make a rehearsal, you can't play Sunday. Tones and personnel don't change between Monday and Sunday. Yes, we use a click track, and there are a million ways to do it (Protools, Tama rhythm watch).

Q: We've had integrity issues. How do you screen musicians and keep accountability?

A: Being people of character is a big deal. Worship is not about music. What we don't need are just good musicians. We need people who live lives of worship. Keeping a good watch is really important. For example, I check tithing records. It's always a test from God, to trust him or your band. At the end of the day, if you can do your solo acoustic thing well, it's all you need.

Q: What's your strategy for raising up worship leaders for other campuses?

A: We currently don't really have a strategy. Pray a lot, get one name, and chase them down. Hiring quickly is to your peril. Start including your younger kids. But if they can't cut it, cut them. There is just too much at stake. Raise them up outside of the stage.

Q: How far out do your players get their music?

A: They get songs a week out. Planning Center Online works well. Prep is a big deal! Let your players know it too. Send a letter to them to communicate your vision and expectations. For example, down beat is 6:30 sharp. And you yourself need to be early. Know their music backwards and forwards and be prayed up!

Q: How do you tell people who aren't musically fit the band no?

A: The price of leadership is to tell people no. If they're not fit for the band, help them figure out what their thing is. There doesn't need to be any hard feelings...there are plenty of other things they can do.

Q: How do you handle communicating new arrangements ahead of time?

A: Ideally we would track new arrangements in Garageband and make detailed notes. The Golden rule is, "would I read it?"

Q: How are things on Sunday scheduled, and is there any leniency?

A: We can call an audible if we feel we need to. But with our campus in Greenville, we have to be extra conscious of the people there. Beg God for help with this...there's a ton at stake!

Q: We use unbelievers on stage. Why don't you?

A: Worship is a lifestyle and we need people to pull prayer weight, but if we had a one-off secular thing, it'd be fine to use a lost person.