PRAISE AND WORSHIP: GENERAL INFORMATION

BASIS FOR PRAISE & WORSHIP

Martin Luther said, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music."

The gratitude of the Church has always gone up to God in praise and song.

-William Barclay

Music is mentioned in the Bible 839 times. King David set priests and Levites in the tabernacle for the sole purpose of ministering with music. He had "round-the-clock" worship, making people aware that worship was not a once-in-a-while event, but a continual lifestyle.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.
Psalm 100:2

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.
Ephesians 5:19

While music is a way of ushering in God's presence, it is not a magic button that can be pushed to make God's people worship. The Latin word for praise is “value” or “price.” Thus, we praise God to proclaim His worth. “Praise” is our response to His person, but "worship" is our response to His perceived presence. Worship transcends normal human activity and it is HOLY.

PWOC-An AWESOME Place!
As praise and worship leader you have an opportunity to take part in the transformation of ordinary meeting places into awesome places of worship. As the Body of Christ comes together, incredible things can happen!

BENEFITS OF CORPORATE WORSHIP
Corporate worship that takes place in a PWOC meeting builds unity. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 describes a situation where this unity took place as a result of worship: The people in this passage were "joined in unison." Music is a unifying factor as we meet together. Think of any given morning, or evening, PWOC meeting and what you may have had to go through to get there. How often has singing together with your sisters in Christ been the vehicle God has used to remove the distractions of the day and provide focus on Him? What a wonderful opportunity you have to lead women into the presence of the Lord!

The trumpeters and singers joined in unison as with one voice to give praise and thanks to the Lord...Then the temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud...for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.
HOW TO LEAD PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Worship leader Ron Kenoly suggests five characteristics of a worship leader:

- The worship leader must be a good student of the Word and be able to discern whether material is in line with Scripture.
- The worship leader must be radically saved by an experience with Christ and be able to lead in prayer.
- The worship leader must be a bold leader. The spirit of fear and timidity can transfer to a congregation.
- The worship leader must be a skilled musician or singer. David appointed skilled musicians to serve in Old Testament worship. This does not mean you need a degree in music, but we need to avoid bad notes and out of tune singing. If your music is bad, there will be a distraction, and people will not enter into worship. (This doesn't mean you must be an excellent soloist; it does mean you need to be able to carry a tune and have a basic knowledge of music.)
- The worship leader must be submissive to authority; there can be a big problem if the worship leader has her own agenda.

Logistics is a word that doesn't sound very spiritual. However, unless the logistical aspects of your praise and worship ministry are carried out well, distractions can prohibit worship taking place.

Focus On God
Our goal and challenge as the lead worshiper is to do things in such a way that it allows women to draw close to Him, to focus their attention on Him. Keeping this in mind we need to be aware of a few things:

1. When you stand before your group, worship. Be prepared and well rehearsed so that you can focus your attention on Him.
2. Don’t become so lost in worship that you are not aware of the status of your group. You are responsible to usher women into God’s presence. Make sure they are there with you.
3. Eliminate distractions. Clothing or equipment that needs frequent adjustment will distract both you and those you seek to lead in worship.
4. Be mindful of your clothing. Modest and appropriate clothes allow worshippers to focus on God, not on you.
Amount of Time
Plan with your President and Spiritual Life Vice President to allot an adequate amount of time within each PWOC meeting for Praise and Worship. While the idea of what “adequate” is varies from group to group and even person to person, most worship leaders will tell you that fifteen minutes is adequate. Although there are differing opinions regarding how much time should be allotted to Praise and Worship, it is important to realize that Praise and Worship is a necessary part of each PWOC gathering. We should not underestimate its significance in setting the tone for everything else that occurs there. Bible study will go deeper, and fellowship will be sweeter if it is preceded by a time of praise and worship.

This said, it is wise to be aware of other things that need to take place during each PWOC gathering, to work as a team player, to be responsible for the time allotted to you, and to be flexible when necessary. Do your part in helping to start the meeting promptly so there will be enough time for everything. Make sure that Praise and Worship does not exceed the time given it. If you have worked with other board members to plan the components of the meeting and something unexpected happens that takes away from your scheduled time, be flexible. With prayer, flexibility, and a strong commitment to ministry, everything that needs to be accomplished in a meeting can be, without missing out on praise and worship time.

A suggested format for an opening session would be:

Note: Morning hours are being used, but can of course be adapted to any time frame.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 - 9:40</td>
<td>“Sing ‘em in” Song</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40 - 9:47</td>
<td>Devotional thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer Requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:47 - 10:00</td>
<td>Praise and Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:10</td>
<td>Corporate Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dismissal to Bible Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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An opening session is considered to be the time before PWOC Bible studies take place. It is usually a time when everyone is together, if there is more than one study taking place. Elements of an opening session include: praise and worship; announcements; devotional thought, and corporate prayer. Ideally, this would take place during the first hour; Bible study would follow for the next hour to hour and a half. However, it can be done effectively in 30-45 minutes.

SELECTING SONGS

Prayer
When selecting songs, the first priority is to pray and spend time asking God what songs should be included. It may be helpful to reflect upon conversations you have had with women in your group. What are they struggling with? What are they rejoicing about? What are their concerns? Songs can speak words of encouragement, proclaim God’s character, and remind us of who God can be in our lives.

Styles
In selecting songs you must think about styles of music. PWOC is a diverse group. We cannot assume that what is one person's preference will be another's. We have a wonderful opportunity to minister grace and courtesy to the Body of Christ. Ron Kenoly tells a story about leading in worship and noticing an older woman in the front of the congregation who was clearly
NOT getting involved. He recounts that as he began singing the hymn *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, her whole countenance changed. It was obvious that even though she wanted to participate, she was apathetic to contemporary worship. In Kenoly's words, "I was not walking down her street." Because he was sensitive to this woman's needs, she was drawn into worship.

Within military chapel communities, there are a variety of denominational and cultural backgrounds coming together to worship. Keeping this in mind, we must be sensitive and generous in this area. This will help create an accepting environment where women will feel comfortable to worship. Charles Swindoll once said, "The church will continue to sing her stately hymns; but, in addition to these, each new generation will continue to compose fresh choruses of worship and new psalms of praise. These songs give the church a relevant expression of her message."

**Balance**

Because of our diversity we must be balanced in our selection of music. Hymns are a part of church history and need to be taught to young women who have just come to know the Lord. Hymns are important for those of us who have been Christians for a while. Women need to be challenged by the depth of meaning the lyrics hold. Hymns teach us the doctrines of the church and remind us of God’s attributes. Some of the wonderful stories of how these great songs came to be written need to be shared. Here is an opportunity to incorporate the PWOC aim "To TEACH women the history, beliefs, and programs of the church, all built on a solid foundation of worship and Bible study."

**Progression**

Worship is an attitude of the heart. It is true that because of circumstances and the world in which we live, women often arrive at PWOC meetings with a spirit of heaviness. Women will need to be led into the Holy of Holies and that requires a progression. There was a progression of entering into that place in the Old Testament, and through music and singing, women can be led there today. At His throne they can leave their distractions and problems, go into a Bible study with a lighter load, and be ready to concentrate on His Word. Songs can be vehicles that usher us into that holy place.

**Flow**

One of the most important things to consider when selecting songs is the flow of the songs. Moving from one song to another as smoothly as possible is important in allowing people to remain in an attitude of worship. It is not necessary to introduce the songs. Remember that your goal is to focus on God, giving women an opportunity to speak to God through song, scripture, and/or responsive reading. There may be times when a brief word from you would be appropriate if it helps to focus women on Who they are singing about, to encourage them to lay aside the things that distract them, or to describe who God has been to them that week.

Equally important is how we transition from each component in the opening session. If we work together with the other board members (President, Spiritual Life, Prayer, etc.), we can develop a flow that enables the attention to remain on God and not on the fact that we are moving from one thing to another. It is helpful to think of Praise and Worship (singing, dancing, drama, living video, etc.), prayer time and devotions as one total experience.

**Coordination and Harmony**

Coordinate and plan music around themes of weekly devotions or programs. Coordinate these themes with your Spiritual Life Vice President for weekly meetings and with the Programs Vice
President for programs. *(Note: It is the Programs Vice President’s prerogative to ask whom she wishes to lead Praise and Worship at Programs). Sometimes the Holy Spirit does this without any help on our part. Those times are precious and affirming! *Always*, He wants us to plan and then *always* be open to His changes and adjustments. Often a song will set the tone of a meeting and prepare hearts for what will be presented.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

**Standing or Sitting**
There needs to be balance with standing and sitting. One of the biggest complaints heard about churches where a big block of time is given for praise and worship is the amount of time people are expected to stand. Sometimes your group needs to stand to have a posture of unity and victory, or to awaken them! However, sitting can enhance the sense of being alone with God, the feeling of needing to communicate with God privately.

There are practical points to this concept, particularly for older or infirm members, and that is that standing for lengths of time can be difficult or impossible. These women may hesitate to come to Praise and Worship because they don’t feel able to participate by standing and are embarrassed to call attention to themselves by sitting. It may be difficult for others to focus their attention on God when their feet or back are hurting from prolonged lengths of standing. Perhaps the best compromise is to make sure that women know that if they cannot stand, they are welcome to sit. Likewise, if everyone is sitting and they wish to stand, they are welcome to do so; however, you might encourage them to move to the back of the room so that those behind them might be able to see.

**Presentation**
Decide how you want to present your music. PowerPoint slides and/or worship DVDs work best, but printed pages will work if you don’t have a Proxima or DVD player. Be sure to use spell check and then read the words over again. A misspelled word can be very distracting and at times can change the meaning of a song. Use a font that is large and easy to read.

*Other suggestions to consider in this area:*

- **Begin a music file.** This is a wonderful resource to build and pass onto your successor. Plastic case file boxes with alphabetized dividers serve this purpose well.

- **Keep a dated record of songs you have sung.**

- **Lead worship with integrity!** When reproducing music in any way, be sure that you have **copyright privileges.** These rights can be purchased easily and economically through the Chaplains’ fund. Check with your PWOC Chaplain concerning this. Chances are your chapel community already has a CCLI account. Be responsible in making sure this most important detail is covered.

- **Check your equipment before PWOC begins.** There is nothing more distracting than having to stop the flow of a meeting to address technical issues.
Involving Others in the Ministry of Praise and Worship
Seek to build a praise team and band. Be an active "talent scout." Listen to women singing around you in chapel or at PWOC meetings, and invite them to be part of a praise team or share a solo. Find out if there are women who play instruments. Don't hesitate to invite others to participate and use their gifts in ministry. You may want to develop and distribute a ministry interest survey in order to discover those in your group with talent and interest in music.

Using Variety
Provide variety through your music ministry. Let your music ministry be a reflection of the diversity of culture and backgrounds represented in your PWOC body. Don't allow your praise and worship to become too familiar and routine. God is a God of creativity and variety! Let variety characterize the special music presented. Use soloists, duets, trios, instrumental presentations, choirs, guest musicians, interpretive liturgical dance, and living videos to enhance your weekly meetings or monthly general meetings.

Planning and Practice
Preparation and practice are important and necessary. Take time to go over songs with your team. Practice rhythm; discuss whether you may repeat the song and if so, what signals to watch for. Go over introductions to songs and endings. If using a sound system and microphones, check out the sound and balance. Remember that sound is "soaked up" by bodies in a room, so the volume will need to be louder when people arrive. These things sound so simple, but they can make a difference in whether or not people are distracted by a poor sound system or an unprepared and unrehearsed music team.

PROGRAMS
Be sure you have an understanding of what is expected of you concerning program days. Try to find special music that will enhance the theme being presented; if you don't have anyone who plays an instrument, accompaniment tracks are available from Christian bookstores and websites.

LAST WORDS...
10 Keys for a Praise and Worship Team:
1. Start on time.
2. Stop on time.
3. Keep talking and praying to a minimum before, during and after singing.
4. Prayerfully select songs that invite the women to worship.
5. Dress modestly.
6. Stay focused on leading Praise and Worship and don't drift into your own world.
7. Invite the ladies to join in Praise and Worship with clapping, standing raised hands. Never condemn anyone's response.
8. Sing at a moderate, comfortable pitch.
9. Keep a pleasant mix of songs - not the same every week and not brand new every week.
10. Keep worshipping the Living God as your sole agenda.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and counsel one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16