



## Worship Ministry Guidelines

<b>Mission Statement and Philosophy</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Practically Speaking...</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Essential Qualifications</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Commitments</b>	<b>6</b>

# Mission Statement and Philosophy

*The Worship Team of Providence Baptist Church exists to worship God in spirit and in truth with authenticity, reverence, intimacy, passion, and expectancy through the use of the musical arts and to lead His people to do the same.*

**We seek to bring glory to God and God alone.** On or off the stage, our lives are a testimony of our devotion to God. While the world around us is constantly lowering the moral and ethical bar, God's standards remain forever constant. Therefore, we will strive to meet His standards for individual integrity and morality, the marriage covenant, parenting, civic responsibility, and devotion to the local church. [[Isaiah 43:7](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)]

**We submit to pastoral authority and leadership in the unified mission of the church.** Christ is the head of the Church globally and locally, but we recognize and honor the role and great responsibility that pastors carry as leaders of the local church body. Furthermore, we understand that our ministry is one of many within the church, distinct from and yet complementary to other ministries in the overall mission of the church. As such, we will encourage unity and support the overall vision for worship, service, and mission outreach cast by the pastor. [[John 17:20-23](#); [Mark 3:25](#); [Hebrew 13:17](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:12-13](#)]

**We function as a body united.** Paul presents in his letters the analogy of the Church as a physical body, each part serving a distinct role yet complementary to the other parts. When any part is absent or injured, the whole body suffers. Therefore, we will edify and encourage each other, celebrate and mourn life events together, and lift each other up in prayer. Moreover, we will actively declare war on the sins of pride and elitism that are so common in artistic circles. [[1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#); [Hebrews 10:24-25](#); [Proverbs 16:18](#)]

**We recognize both the rich history of worship and the innovation which helped to shape it.** To discard songs, worship structures, liturgical elements, etc. merely because they are old dishonors the amazing work that God has done through history in shaping His Church. Likewise, to cling stubbornly to the past merely for the sake of nostalgia is shortsighted and often idolatrous. The Bible repeatedly instructs us to "sing unto the Lord a new song" – our worship should aim to be as fresh as are God's mercies! After all, even the oldest hymn was once brand new. With God's help and discernment, we will use those traditional elements that functionally serve our specific church body by leading its membership to worship God. Further, we will seek to discover and embrace newer worship elements that accomplish the same goal. [[Matthew 13:52](#); [Psalm 33:3](#)]

**We strive for undistracting excellence, prioritizing congregational participation over performance.** While worship is ultimately a matter of the heart, our challenge is to eliminate physical, spiritual, social, and emotional obstacles that would prevent the outpouring of worship into the public arena. As leaders of worship practices, we must delicately encourage the individual and collective participation of the worshippers without allowing either careless or self-promoting performance to distract them from focusing on God. [[Malachi 1:6-8](#); [Matthew 6:1-4](#); [Colossians 3:23-24](#)]

## Practically Speaking...

Practical application of this team's mission statement and philosophy for ministry leads to the following essential guidelines that will govern how we do what we do.

**We will invest in relationships with our church family.** Our ability to lead in worship is directly affected by the trust we earn from those we are leading. As we demonstrate authentic love and concern for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, they are more likely to understand that our intentions in worship leadership are for the good of all. It is within the comfort of this trust relationship that folks are more likely to set aside their various personal preferences and worship together in unity.

**We will present ourselves in a non-distracting way.** In a concert environment, a band's "stage presence" is wrapped up in all the ways it draws attention to itself – excessive or exaggerated movement, musical showmanship, flamboyant dress, and so on. We, however, wish to draw attention only to God and His greatness. Therefore, our dress and speech and physical movements and performance approach will be best described as "modest and humble".

**We will lead worship by example.** As we humbly accept the responsibility of leading our church to worship, we must ourselves be spiritually and mentally prepared to worship. We must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance – and obedient to the Scriptural mandates – of our own postures and expressions of worship. We worship and perform for an audience of One, passionately recruiting and teaching and encouraging our congregation to join us in doing so.

**We will be faithful in our attendance of regular church services.** While some churches may deem it acceptable to hire outside musicians to lead worship activities, we believe that a congregation is more likely to follow the leadership of those they know personally and trust. Members of this team are expected to attend church services regularly, even those services for which they are not scheduled to participate in leadership roles.

**We will grow the team spiritually, artistically, and numerically.** Team members must be willing to invest in each other's spiritual growth, offering both encouragement and loving admonishment as the Spirit gives discernment, and gracefully receiving the same. Team members must seek the best in each other artistically, too. This may mean, for example, that more experienced musicians occasionally assume the role of an intentional mentor as a younger or less experienced musician serves in his or her stead. Finally, we will encourage others in the church with compatible gifts and talents to share them as a part of this team.

**We will balance the introduction of new songs with continued, regular use of familiar ones.** As exciting as it can be to introduce new music, every new song necessarily requires additional mental attention from the congregation merely to begin understanding and memorizing its structure, melody, and lyrics. That is mental energy that is not being directly applied to actual worship.

**We will select songs that can reasonably be learned and sung by untrained singers.** Songs with overly complicated structures and melodies are challenging to "connect with" and memorize even for skilled musicians; for those incapable of meeting that challenge such songs merely discourage participation.

**We will enjoy the freedom to arrange and perform songs as best suits the collective talents of our team and the worshippers we serve.** Worship songs and popular worship songwriters are ultimately means to an end, and not themselves objects of worship. Moreover, God has given us all the

ability to “create” – a shadow of His own creative character. So rather than attempting to mimic – note for note, guitar lick for guitar lick – the studio recordings of popular worship songs, we will freely modify and adapt songs in ways that we feel will best serve our church. For example, we might choose to reproduce the dominant instrumental hook or motif found in a popular recording of a song as a memory aid, but we won’t obsess about such things. The following are some additional modifications we will freely make:

- We will play songs in keys that are singable by both male and female untrained singers. Generally speaking, we find that the vocal range common to both male and female untrained singers extends from a G to the D which is one-and-a-half octaves above it. Asking participants to regularly sing songs whose melodies run outside of this common range risks discouraging participation.
- We will avoid excessive iterations of repetitive vocal phrases. Music is a powerful medium, able to affect the listener’s emotions even where no lyrical content is employed. While we wish to engage worshippers at an emotional level, too, we do not want to be guilty of manipulating emotions and, in doing so, encouraging insincere worship.
- We will shorten or omit excessively long instrumental interludes in which the congregation is unable to participate. An amazing instrumental performance can be a truly anointed artistic expression of worship! However, during segments of our worship services in which the congregation is encouraged to participate vocally, we will use instrumental segments sparingly and in a fashion that does not draw undue attention to the performance.

# Essential Qualifications

1. **Spiritual maturity** – This is a leadership-type ministry and, hence, is ordinarily not a place for new or immature Christians.
2. **Musical talent and appropriate gear** – Worship musicians need to be skilled enough to successfully render both planned *and unplanned* segments of music. While the adult choir generally consults detailed sheet music for their performances, other musical ministries in the church do not. (It is extremely rare that we have access to full sheet music for every instrument used in every song.) As such, here are some specific expectations along these lines:
  - Musicians must have a general understanding of fundamental musical theory (keys, chord variants, time signatures, etc.).
  - Musicians must be able to follow a simplified lead or chord sheet.
  - Musicians must be able to follow the designated leader so that when things go “off script” (through the Holy Spirit’s guidance or human error), confusion doesn’t hinder worship.
  - Generally speaking, instrumentalists must provide their own musical gear – guitars, amplifiers, cabling, tuners, capos, picks, drumsticks, etc. Some exceptions exist where the church has purchased gear to be shared by musicians.
  - Instrumentalists must be able to discern how to use their instrument to support the musical “big picture,” avoid overplaying, and be able to play songs in any key.
  - Vocalists must be able to find and/or create harmony parts without the assistance of sheet music.
3. **Time** – Practice sessions, Sunday preparation and ministry are mandatory. In addition, there may be seminars, special retreats and events, and more. Involvement in this ministry needs to take high priority next to family and vocation in the life of each of its participants.
4. **Support of family** – As noted elsewhere, service in this ministry requires a time investment. Additionally, it includes the financial obligation to procure and maintain musical instruments and gear. Finally, the visible nature of this ministry is one that naturally tends to invite the attention of others. Within a family, these resources – time, money, and privacy – are very much held in common. As such, it is important that those who wish to serve on this team have the complete support of their immediate family to do so, and that commitment to this ministry not interfere with their God-given responsibilities to their family.
5. **Ability to flow with the team** – Some people are very gifted musicians, but for one reason or another they have trouble flowing with the team. These individuals are highly encouraged to share their musical gifts with the church in other ways (e.g., special music, choir, or small groups of similar interest).
6. **Civic integrity** – All members and prospective members of the Worship Team must be willing to undergo a limited background check. (Minor traffic infractions are not an issue.)

# Commitments

1. **Commitment to being spiritually prepared to minister** – Our spiritual preparation has a direct effect on our effectiveness as a worship and music ministry team. We need to come ready not only to sing and play music but to worship the King and minister to His people. Talent alone makes for a great show; the power of the Holy Spirit is required for worship.
2. **Commitment to musical expertise** – We need to work at our instrumental and/or vocal ability to become the very best we can be. This means a great deal of individual practice (perhaps including professional training) as well as playing with the team. Keep in mind that the team will only be as musically proficient as the individuals in that team.
3. **Commitment to spiritual growth** – This too is as important on an individual basis as it is with the team. As a leadership ministry, we need to be committed to maturing in Christ.
4. **Commitment to the team** – More than individual expertise, our musical goal should be the ability to contribute to a team effort. We need to look at our team as not just a collection of separate musicians but as a single unit with a single purpose. Our heart attitude should not be to shine forth our own technical skill but to use that skill to enhance the worship experience as a whole and to draw attention to God.
5. **Commitment to weekly practice sessions** – Musicians and singers are required to attend and participate in scheduled rehearsals and pre-service sound checks related to services for which they are scheduled. We generally do not attempt to reproduce note-for-note the studio recordings of popular worship songs, favoring the creative input of each team member instead. As such, participation in practice sessions is crucial.
6. **Commitment to communication** – Team members must commit to timely responses to electronic communication, both in the form of interpersonal messages and scheduling requests. Our music selection takes into consideration the available musicianship, so it is important to make your availability and unavailability known to the Worship Leader as soon as possible.
7. **Commitment to being a witness outside of church walls** – Should at any time during your involvement in the music ministry and/or worship team you feel that your personal life is not reflecting what we are about or what Christ would have, we ask that you voluntarily step down so that His name and work would not be publicly mocked.