



Worship Leaders and Musicians What is their place in House Church?

We who have grown up in traditional Churches have all too often only known of one form of music ministry. Worse yet, those who have led in worship have only known of one form of worship leading.

Now that many of us have left the traditional settings, in favor of the approach to Church that Jesus taught His disciples, we have much to “unlearn” from our former approach to Church. Some things are easier to leave behind, such as the over control of an arrogant Senior Pastor. Some are harder, such as the tender control of a spiritual worship leader, who led us to the feet of Jesus and helped us weep with love for Him. But, in both cases they must be exchanged for Jesus’ way; a way not familiar or initially comfortable.

Because so much in Church has been distorted from Jesus’ original purpose, it is necessary for us to recover God’s true concepts and then work from there towards biblical approaches to everything we do in our gatherings.

Now, before we begin this painful journey, let me say something very important, or else I will lose you from the beginning and the truth will be lost in anxiety. It is this - Jesus does receive honor from much of what currently passes as “Worship, Song, and Music Ministry.”

I firmly believe this. Just because I’m about to present a teaching that I firmly believe more accurately portrays His desire for song and music, please don’t assume I’ve concluded that Jesus has been absent from our current approaches. He graces, with His presence, much of what is currently in vogue, and much of what precedes us in past generations and settings. If Jesus were only to grace what aligns perfectly with His desires for us, He would not likely have much to grace.

Towards the close of this study I will suggest some directions I believe the Lord will take in restoring the proper understanding and function of music and song in His Church. We believe there will be teaching ministers in this critical and important ministry, and we long for the day of their fuller release and blessing into the body.

Having said this, it still should leave us desiring to more accurately approach Him, in this very important area, in a way that accurately reflects His heart and will, rather than relying upon His mercy to tolerate and bless what we present to Him. Hopefully we can all be in agreement with a vision of a purer ministry of music coming forth, if not then I would suggest your need is not a clearer vision of music and singing, but salvation itself.

Salvation implies He is our Lord, and we want to do things His way. This is my assumption of each of you reading. If we care little about whether our approaches represent His leading and flow out of our honoring Him, then something is far more wrong than just the way we

sing. Hopefully this short treatise will be supportive and reflective of His heart for the place of music and song.

To begin this return, as regards the nature of true worship, we take a careful look at the concept of Worship. Most in the body of Christ are unaware that the concept of worship is only remotely connected to song and music. Most of us think of song, music, and worship as being inextricably connected and virtually synonymous in meaning. Not so.

Let's take a rather long excursive into a biblical understanding of Worship.

What is the true Nature of Worship?

Genesis 22:5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will **worship** and then we will come back to you."

- Worship involves obedience to the will of God.
- Worship involves expressing trust in the goodness, faithfulness, and power of God.
- Worship involves sacrifice.

Exodus 3:12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will **worship** God on this mountain."

- Worship is connected with the presence of God and His law.

Exodus 8:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may **worship** me.

- Israel was called to come out of Egypt, bondage, the world, to draw near to God alone.

Exodus 10:26 Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshiping the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to **worship** the LORD."

- Worship involves sacrificial offerings being given to the Lord.
- Worship involves whatever God has given you being given back to Him for His direction of service and giving.

Exodus 23:24 Do not **bow down** before their gods or **worship** them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces.

- Bowing down, over and over again throughout Scripture, is inextricably connected to worship.

Exodus 23:25 **Worship** the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you,

- Worship brings blessings.

Deuteronomy 5:9 You shall not **bow down** to them or **worship** them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

- Worship is a behavior and practice that clearly separates the two opposing kingdoms.
- Worship involves acknowledging God's exclusive ownership of His people.

Deuteronomy 8:19 If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and **worship and bow down** to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

- Worship involves a refusal to bow down to anything connected with Satan.
- Worship involves a commitment to true holiness.

Deuteronomy 11:16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and **worship** other gods and **bow down** to them.

- Worship protects against deception and exposes it.

Deuteronomy 30:17 But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to **bow down** to other gods and **worship** them,

- Bowing down, bowing down, bowing down. Worship almost always involves bowing down.
- It is really difficult to believe one has truly worshiped, in a biblical manner, without the change of physical posture and bowing.

(It is important to notice, in all of the Pentateuch, from Genesis to Deuteronomy, music and singing is never mentioned in connection with this word Worship.)

Joshua 22:27 On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will **worship** the LORD at his sanctuary with our burnt **offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings**. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no share in the LORD.'

- Worship involves the right place, the right elements, and fidelity.

1 Samuel 1:3 Year after year this man went up from his town to **worship** and **sacrifice** to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.

- Again worship and sacrifice are connected.
- Worship cannot happen without some form of sacrifice taking place, either of physical things, or heart attitudes.

1 Kings 1:47 Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David,

saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!' And the king **bowed in worship** on his bed 48 and said, 'Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.'"

- Bowing in worship. Gratitude is an expression of worship.

2 Kings 17:28,35 28 So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the LORD. 35 When the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites, he commanded them: "Do not **worship** any other gods or **bow down** to them, **serve** them or **sacrifice** to them.

- One must learn "how" to worship. Much of the how has to do with "who" is worshiped.

It involves posture, sacrifice, and service.

1 Chronicles 16:29 ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring **an offering** and come before him; **worship** the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

- Offerings of sacrifice are a part of worship. Holiness and worship are linked together.

2 Chronicles 20:18 Jehoshaphat **bowed with his face to the ground**, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem **fell down in worship** before the LORD.

- Bowing one's face, all the way to the ground, is a form of worship.

2 Chronicles 29:28 The whole assembly **bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played**. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed.

- The entire assembly bowed. It's not just a private act, but a corporate one too.
- Here we see one of the first examples in Scripture, where music, singing, and worship, were all connected together. But notice, bowing in worship is the main focus of the concept of worship. The singing and music appears to simply be an attendant feature.

Ezra 7:19 Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for **worship** in the temple of your God.

- Sacred articles are involved in worship. God will often lead us to attach great spiritual significance to things we use in our liturgy of approach to Him.

Job 1:20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he **fell to the ground in worship**

- Falling on the ground in worship.

Psalms 22:29 All the rich of the earth will feast and **worship**; all who go down to the dust will **kneel before him**— those who cannot keep themselves alive.

- Kneeling.

Psalm 29:2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; **worship** the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

- Holiness.

Psalm 95:6 Come, let us **bow down in worship**, let us **kneel before** the LORD our Maker;

- Bowing and kneeling. Acknowledge of His greatness and power.

Psalm 96:9 **Worship** the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; **tremble** before him, all the earth.

- Holiness, trembling.

Psalm 99:5 Exalt the LORD our God and **worship at his footstool**; he is holy.

- At His footstool. Holiness.

Psalm 100:2 **Worship** the LORD with **gladness**; come before him with **joyful songs**.

- Gladness, singing, and it is implied that musical instruments would be involved.
- It is very clear here that music and singing can and should be a significant part in our bowing, kneeling, falling, serving, and sacrificing of our lives before the Lord

Psalm 132:7 "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us **worship at his footstool**—

- Footstool.

Isaiah 19:21 So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will **worship with sacrifices and grain offerings**; they will **make vows** to the LORD and keep them.

- Worship with sacrifices and commitments.

Isaiah 29:13 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their **worship** of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

- Worship involves the heart, and never on man made rules. Men and their rules and controls have always been a hindrance to the true spirit of worship.

Daniel 3:5,6,10,11,12,14,15

5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must **fall down and worship** the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 Whoever does not **fall down and worship** will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." 10 You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who **hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship** the image of gold, 11 and that whoever does not **fall down and worship** will be thrown into a blazing furnace. 12 But there are some Jews whom you have

set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor **worship** the image of gold you have set up." 14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not **serve** my gods or **worship** the image of gold I have set up? 15 Now when you **hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship** the image I made, very good. But if you do not **worship** it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

- The devil employs what he learned in heaven regarding worship. He uses Music. Falling down. Falling down in connection with worship music. Worship of the true image of God is a key, as opposed to an idol. Fidelity to God alone.

Zephaniah 1:5 those who **bow down** on the roofs to **worship** the starry host, those who **bow down and swear** by the LORD and who also swear by Molech,

- Bowing down with commitments.

Matthew 4:9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will **bow down and worship** me."

- Bow down.

Matthew 15:9 They **worship** me in vain; their teachings are but **rules taught by men.**"

- Vain worship is worship that has all kinds of man's restrictions, rules, and controls on it. Only God has the right to determine how true worship should look. When men impose their rules it creates a vain approach.

Mark 7:7 They **worship** me in vain; their teachings are but **rules taught by men.'**

- Mark says the same thing. Jesus' words impacted them on this point.

John 4:20-24 20 Our fathers **worshiped** on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must **worship** is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will **worship** the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans **worship** what you do not know; we **worship** what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of **worshipers** the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and **his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.**"

- Worshiping with understanding is important. Worship involves the born again human spirit connecting to the realm of revelatory truth.

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your **spiritual act of worship**.

- The primary sacrifice of worship that we bring is the totality of our lives.

1 Corinthians 14:25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will **fall down and worship** God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

- Falling down. Worship is connected with revelation again.

Philippians 3:3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who **worship by the Spirit of God**, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—

- True worship can only take place when one is controlled by the Spirit of God. Glorifying in Christ and not glorying in the flesh is a major key.

Colossians 2:23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their **self-imposed worship**, their **false humility** and their **harsh treatment of the body**, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

- Once again, men create self imposed worship and rules, but it is always a false thing and leads people away from true worship. False worship is known by the fact that it doesn't lead one closer to God, leaves one just as powerless against sin as before the experience of worship, and has no spiritual effect.

Hebrews 9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for **worship** and also an earthly sanctuary.

- Verses 2-10 go on to tell us that the external regulations of the Tabernacle gave way to the spiritual worship that God has always been after.

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so **worship** God acceptably with reverence and awe,

- Thankfulness is connected with worship, along with reverence and awe.

Revelation 4:10 the twenty-four elders **fall down** before him who sits on the throne, and **worship** him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

- Even those in heaven still fall down in worship.

Revelation 19:10 At this I **fell at his feet to worship him**. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

- Don't ever fall at men's or angel's feet, only God is worthy of this kind of worship. Don't ever let men take the place of your devotion to God. Beware, they will try.

Revelation 22:8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I **fell down to worship** at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me.

- Fell down.

Revelation 22:9 But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. **Worship God!**"

- Worship God! Whatever else you do or don't do Worship God!

So, as we have seen, from Genesis to Revelation, Worship involves:

1. Bowing down.
2. Kneeling.
3. Falling down.
4. Face to the ground.
5. Sacrifice.
6. Service.
7. Adoration.
8. Praise.
9. With music at times, but not generally.
10. With song at times, but not generally.
11. With the heart.
12. With understanding.
13. With thankfulness
14. With obedience.
15. With Commitments to Holiness.
16. In Spirit and in Truth.
17. In His presence.
18. While Drawing near.

All throughout the Scripture, music and singing is rarely connected with the term worship, though it is clear that it can and does have a part in some aspects of worship. In our day worship, music, and singing, have become synonymous terms. Why is this a concern?

Because the approach to worship has taken on clearly unbiblical forms and the almost exclusive connection of the concept of worship to music and singing is one clear evidence.

Worship has far more to do with the attitude of heart, and is expressed in a wide variety of manifestations, of which music and singing are only a small part.

But, when the Church took the concept of worship out of its broader biblical context, and

connected it primarily with music and singing, then unbiblical concepts of worship developed.

What are some of those unbiblical concepts? To answer this we will narrow our answer to within the New Testament and early Church context. It is there we discover the true expression of worship and come to see the errors that have crept into our practice of this concept.

Clarifications of Roles

1. Making worship primarily about music and singing has no New Testament precedent.

You will look in vain to connect worship with music and singing in the New Testament, as though they were the essential elements of worship. It is simply not there.

2. Creating specific ministry functions, within the New Testament model of Church, has no New Testament precedent. They had no hierarchical "Worship Leaders." They had no support musicians who took their every cue from the worship leader.

- a. Hierarchical Worship Leaders.

We have created, as an expression of the hierarchical deviation of leadership understanding, the concept of active participants and passive participants. Active participants (i.e. Worship Leaders) tell us what songs we will sing, how many verses of those songs we will sing, how many times we will sing a verse, whether we will linger in a crescendo of song and praise or move on to the next song. They tell us when the song service will begin, and when it will end. They reflect and order themselves under the hierarchical leadership of the Senior Pastor, who lets them know just how much time he is going to allow them to sing, and if they go beyond this time they are often chastised by his hierarchical authority after the "service." (Service is another term entirely lacking in the New Testament concept of the gathered Church, and reflects the thinking that makes room for and encourages such specialized functions as "Hierarchical Worship Leaders.")

The passive participants learn that they are not to fulfill Ephesians 5:19-20
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and 1 Corinthians 14:26 26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, **each of you has a psalm**, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Instead, the passive participants are indirectly taught that only the professionals on the stage can hear from God, as to what to sing, when it is allowed to prophesy in song, or to introduce a song from the Lord to the congregation.

All that the passive participants are allowed to do is sing what they are told to sing, and on the rare occasion when the passive participants are allowed a brief opportunity for one or two of them to offer a song, the rest are required to sit passively and spectate. The anticipation of all sharing a song is nowhere present.

The emphasis that the "building oriented" Church has brought, with its large audiences,

is an emphasis on professional worship clergy, and passive spectating participants. This does not square with New Testament teaching and pattern. Large gatherings were not the pattern, and passive spectators were not the pattern.

Only when we remove the roles of professional worship clergy, and return to the small, simple, active participatory approach to Church, do we find the otherwise passive spectating members feeling the boldness and prompting of the Lord to share a song received from Him.

b. Support musicians.

Musicians are taught to take their cues directly from the “Worship Leader.” If they were to suddenly take off, on their own, without his awareness or approval, while he/she may tolerate it for the sake of harmony and congregational decorum during the service, you can be sure they would be chastised after the service. They live to accompany and “serve” the “Worship Leader.” Now you ask, so what is so wrong with being a good servant? Nothing, except when it comes to music in the New Testament Church no such role of serving exists. No such role of “Worship Leader” exists. Musicians, as well as all believers when gathered, are not to be under the control of men, in servile roles, but exist exclusively as servants of the Most High Himself. They are to take their cues from none other than Jesus. While Asaph was the Worship Leader of the Temple of Solomon, Jesus is the only Hierarchical Worship Leader within the Temple of His believers. This thing of having musicians take their every cue from the Worship Leaders assumes the leader is the only one who can receive the Lord’s direction for the gathering time and singing. Such a notion is no where present in the New Testament.

All too often music, even in the Church, has been more about technique, skill, technology, expensive instruments, expensive sound systems, impressive presentation, and why? Is it truly because Jesus deserves the best? Especially when Jesus never even hints that He desires His Church to be entertained or impressed by musicians, nor to lull his saints into passivity while they spectate others leading. Once again, the “building oriented” gathering approach virtually necessitates expensive sound systems and instruments so the congregants can clearly hear the sound coming forth from the stage, where the performance is being given. All too often, those playing their instruments only come to Church when its their turn to play, or squabble when they miss their opportunity, or push for solos, or push to be closer to the front of the stage, or want their instruments turned up louder, or want to be featured in some way, or be given better and more expensive instruments, and on and on it goes. Many primarily come to Church because it is their time to shine, to jam, to showcase, or to be needed.

They will tolerate sermons they don’t enjoy, services that bore them, politics that upset them, just for the opportunity to play their instruments. Needless to say, these are not the motivations Jesus had in mind for His saints gathering. Those who are honest, and have been in these music ministry teams, will tell you, they wrestle with having the right attitude and motivation for their playing. The entire approach creates a temptation that many wrestle with and fall before. Their self lives are stressed because they long to be seen and heard, when it is Jesus we are coming together to see and hear. Church has all too often become all about great music, entertaining worship experiences, and the teaching of Scripture and intimate relationship with the Jesus who dwells within other believers is rarely the focus.

The temptation of the musician to flatter the worship leader, so as to be given the opportunity to be on the platform is all too great. Friendships are maintained and lost around such issues. Those who are shunned by the worship leader, in favor of more skilled musicians, or by those who have succored a better relationship with the worship leader, are in competition with one another. Motivations are severely stressed. If you have not been close to those in this realm you can't know the torment they often face.

And why does such temptation face them? Because their roles have no biblical precedent. Were there musicians in the early Church? Undoubtedly! But, how did they function? There is not a shred of evidence that they led the congregations, nor that they featured themselves, nor that some could play while others were rotated in and out of the musical roles. The entire rotation concept has no New Testament precedent, and is often very offensive to the musicians and singers. It creates a system that demands some form of hierarchy.

The roles of musicians in the early Church would have been nothing more than gentle supports to whatever the Holy Spirit was leading them and those gathering. If they played or sang a special it would only be because they heard the Lord requesting it. No worship leader gave them their cues, and none were directly controlled by anyone other than Jesus. No expensive sound systems would have been necessary, and all could have participated as led by the Spirit. As Jesus would prompt a brother or sister to bring forth a song of the Spirit, or a song well known, the musicians would have simply accompanied and enhanced the song they brought forth.

A simple, non intrusive, non pacifying approach was utilized in the early Church, so that all could participate as the Spirit led, and so no one person or group of persons were magnified in the place where Jesus alone was to be magnified.

The inclusions of "professional" musicians and worship leaders is a usurpation of the role of the Spirit of Jesus in the midst of "His" Church. It is time for worship leaders to step down, reintegrate into the body, and become simply an encourager of the body in an area of gifting and calling the Lord has given to them. There will be leaders in this critical area, but their leading will be of a non professional, non hierarchical, non salaried approach.

Certainly we can envision those who are uniquely gifted in the ministry of song encouragement and musical ability, but their function must never approach anything that looks exclusive or hierarchical in nature.

We would envision the approach to music to have been that which encouraged the presence and power of Jesus while focusing on Him alone, rather than on being entertained by jazzy musicians and hot shot worship leaders. The day of passive spectating must come to an end. Singer and musicians must come down from their platforms, relinquish their control, and be supportive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the body.

3. What of occasional large celebratory gatherings?

Sure, if they can do so with no one on a platform, no one "up front", no hierarchy, and full body participation under the singular leadership control of the Holy Spirit. I'm convinced this is possible and that we will see it, but we will not see until we have given up our false notions of worship, music, and song leadership.

When we have completely given up the notion of the necessity of someone “leading from the front,” and learned to connect to Him who leads from Heaven, then we will be ready to gather large numbers of believers together in His presence. Until then, all such attempts will usurp Jesus’ role and turn those gathering back into passive spectators again.

However we gather to sing and play our instruments, it MUST be ALL about Worship, and music and song is not the greatest or primary measure of worship. Worship will always be primarily a falling on our knees and faces before the Lord of Heaven and Earth, in adoring obeisance and love. The focus will be on Him, not leaders and not musicians.

Worship, however we do it, and especially if we connect it to music and song, must illicit and be birthed from our knees in singular focus on Jesus Himself. Any other purpose for music in worship, when the saints gather, becomes little more than a tipping of the hat to Jesus while we worship our skills, the emotional jolt we get from emotionally stimulating music, and the power we enjoy while being in control of such a spiritual time before God and the people.

This is the reason we have seen such ridiculous aberrations of song and music in recent years. While certainly we believe the Holy Spirit could induce shaking, swooning, crying, and falling under the power of His presence, everyone connected to such experiences, if they will be honest, will admit that much of what we have seen in these manifestations have not been truly led of the Spirit, but have been simply manifestations of the emotional dimensions of our flesh that love the stimulating feelings we experience when we have pushed ourselves into a brain stimulated induced state of rapture. This is, and always has been, a counterfeit of the true ministry of the powerful presence of Jesus. While we long for every true manifestation of His Spirit, and believe each manifestation is meant for the common good, and deep edifying of His body, much of what Christianity has dished up, in these frenzied “Revival/Refreshing” meetings has been little more than the love of emotional stimulation and exuberant self demonstration of false humility.

While many will rancor at such definitions, in the quiet of honesty of your hearts, you, along with me, will have to admit, that not all that we have experienced in these times of refreshing have truly been about Jesus. The flesh has far too often been far too evident.

Until the Church returns to true worship of Jesus, in the small and simple participatory environment of Church in the home, under the singular control of the Spirit of Jesus, we are going to continue to see counterfeit worship forced upon unsuspecting participants, and Jesus shuffled to the back of the room while we do silly things in His name.

It is time for the Church to return to her roots. 1850 years have not improved the Church, or the approach the apostles established. The apostles didn’t give us a modifiable approach to gathering. They gave us the pattern Jesus gave them, for all time. A pattern that gives all hierarchy and control to Jesus. A pattern that puts all the focus and spotlight on Jesus. Song leaders and musicians gently follow His lead, never seek to be seen, and let Jesus be the focus of our every time together. Read the book of Revelation. This is what you see there. This must return to the Church if the Church is to understand the true place of music and song as one expression of Worship.

Certainly music and song, when dedicated to the Lord Jesus, can and has been a tremendous source of blessing to the body of Christ, down throughout the centuries. Undoubtedly it is the will of God for this continue. It is when we showcase leaders and musicians, rather than Jesus Himself, in our times of gathering unto Him, that we err. Music for entertainment sake has little if any place when the body comes together as an expression of Church. Such gatherings are times of drawing near to Jesus, not emphasizing human skills. This is true for every aspect of our gathering times. We do not seek to be seen, but to see Jesus. We do not seek to be heard, but to hear Jesus. And what is the place for those who have been Worship Leaders in the institutional Church? They move into the role of equippers for the work of ministry. Their function is to teach the body of Christ how to let music be something the Lord will use to open their spirits and create a worshipful focus on Jesus alone. Their place is an important place.

They need not fear having no place of ministry. The ministry of song and music is a wonderful ministry, and those who have experienced pure ministry from the hearts of those whose sole desire was to magnify Jesus, have experienced a wonderful thing.

Much is to be learned of allowing music to draw us into His presence, to bring forth a prophetic atmosphere, and to bring forth the high praises of Israel. We need Worship Leaders, just as we need all the other aspects of leadership in the House of the Lord. In this article we primarily contend for a cessation of “hierarchical” worship leading, towards a leadership that equips the saints, brings forth the spiritual song from the midst of the body, and follows closely the leading of the Spirit in each expression of music and song.

As the Church returns to its place of gathering in the home, in non hierarchical settings, we envision teaching ministers of music going from gathering to gathering, teaching in spiritual understandings of flowing into the presence of the Lord in song and music. We envision them training musicians to support the flow of the Spirit, rather than hinder it by show-casing their own talents. We envision the small simple house gatherings to become places of high praises and deep intercessory prayer in song and music. There is much need for understanding in this area, and as it comes to the body we believe tremendous times in God’s presence will result.

And while any current “Worship Leaders” reading this article would be unwise to anticipate salaries from these small house fellowships, yet, as with all teaching ministries in the Church, the Lord has clearly instructed the body to support, by way of gifts, offerings, and tithes, those ministries that truly reflect the heart of Christ and evidence His leading in their lives. In time we envision teaching ministers in this capacity moving amongst the fellowships and receiving a portion of their life support from such ministry. Make no mistake about it, God will raise up leaders in this area. He will make provision for them.

We do need those who are gifted in this area of ministry and body life. It will look different than most of us have seen it before, but it will bring great glory to Jesus Christ, and great edification to His body.