

The Role of Leader in Group Practices

Contributed by Nick Drake
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There is a most definite art to the task of organizing a group of musicians in the playing of Worship Material - in fact, any material. Once the position of leader has been assigned a whole host of issues to be dealt with emerge in regard to the actual communication between the leader and the rest of the group. It is seemingly so easy to cause friction and resentment amongst the group because of the style of your leadership.

It is quite easy in theory to solve, but in practice, so very hard sometimes for the leader to do. On the most basic (but most influential) level, it is a matter of the leader being very much inclusive in his or her role, trying ones best at all times to ensure that everyone feels included in what is happening - where the music is going, how the song takes shape, etc. This comes down to suggesting ideas with options for disagreement rather than telling a musician what he or she must play in this part. Each member in the group is there because God has gifted them with their musical gift and he has anointed them to play music to his praise in this situation. The leader must always remember this and show and think respect for his team. Everyone is different and there may well be some people in the team who have lots of confidence in doing their own thing and feel totally free to go for it. There may be others though, who have some fear of man in them and will look to the leader for more instructions and direction on how to play. The leader has to understand this and as soon as possible in the team, get to know each persons position in terms of confidence, ability and motivation. The leader can then act on the situation by encouraging where encouragement is needed, suggesting direction where direction is needed, and also backing off when a musician has the ability and the confidence to perform freely within the group. Motivation within the group can similarly be variable. A lack of enthusiasm can easily creep in especially if the musician is being dictated what to do all the time and is made to feel (intentionally or not) less than the leader. Everyone should be enjoying themselves. In practice this is very hard, but it must be ascertained to. Yes, it can be hard work, but it is to be enjoyed. I would even go as far as to suggest that if a musician isn't enjoying playing - whether in the practice or on the night - then they should release themselves from the responsibility. It is vitally important to have breaks of course, no-one should ever continuously be playing or leading. It will become routine, a task one has to do, and the enthusiasm and passion will go. Most importantly the role of worshipper will be neglected in favour of worship leader or musician. Not to say of course, that one can't worship when up front but it is harder and there is something very important about being in the crowd, actually being a worshipper amongst worshippers. Here are some rough guidelines on how to go about leading the practice in terms of arranging a particular song.

- If its a new song play it to the group.
- Say how you'd like the song to sound - if you want to do something different with it, etc.
- Ask if anyone has any ideas on how else it could be done.
- Try out these ideas and discuss what the group thought worked and what didn't.
- Remember at the end of the day, you are the leader and if there is a lack of response or no agreement then your voice is the one to be heard and accepted, but always try to avoid being too dictating.

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