

Hope Evangelical Free Church
A Philosophy of Worship

The word *worship*, according to the dictionary, means "to ascribe worth to, to bow down to, to give homage to" God. Therefore, what we call worship should involve one or more of those characteristics. Worshipping is not simply attending a church service. *Worship* involves a choice on the part of the worshipper to give adoration and homage, to ascribe worth to God. One can attend a *worship service* and not be a worshipper. Almost every Biblical example of *worship* involves a physical action as well. Bowing down is in the very definition of *worship*. But Biblical *worship* can involve singing, shouting, clapping, lifting up hands, dancing, prostrating oneself, and are Biblical. We will do our best to provide an atmosphere where our church family, made up of differing individuals, are free to connect with God in a way that is comfortable for them. We want to provide an atmosphere where there is freedom in *worship* and encourage a passion for God.

We don't believe one form of music is more *sacred* than another -- though we may find some forms are more effective in different situations than others. Different forms of music are more effective in different situations than others. Different forms of music are more effective with different groups of people -- each having their own musical language that they relate to. God is looking for hearts that seek Him. We believe in using a variety of forms of music in our *worship* to help a wide range of people connect with God. We will also encourage *looking out for the interests of others* -*Phil. 2:4* when a particular style of music may not be someone's favorite.

We believe that access into the *presence* of God was provided through the blood of Jesus. We don't believe that there are musical *formulas* for getting into the presence of God.

We believe in doing our music with excellence in order to offer to God our best and to provide an atmosphere that fosters *worship* with the least amount of distraction as possible to the listener/participator. Therefore we believe that *worship* team members need to have a certain level of musical ability (along with spiritual maturity). "Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy" (Psalms 33:3). This is not about perfection or performance. It is about being prepared and giving our best.

We will also use other art forms in our service, appropriately and as God leads, to bring glory to Him. Drama, photography, textiles, media, banners/flags, and movement may all be used. We will aspire to use these under leadership of the church and in God-honoring ways.

We believe that being in worship ministry involves having a foundation of our worth and value demonstrated at the cross of Jesus Christ. Worship ministry is not a place to prove our worth and value or showcase our talents. We are looking for people who are growing in confidence of God's love for them and minister out of a growing, abiding relationship with Him. People may need ministry themselves for a season before being in a position to minister to others.

Special music is also part of worship ministry. It can be done as a solo, small group, or worship team. Again, this time is not a time to impress people with musical ability or a filler. Our desire is to have this time stand alone as an effective ministry through music. This song, if done meaningfully, sincerely, and with quality, can have as much impact as any other part of the worship service. The two focuses a song can have are: either it is directed to the Lord as a worship song (can be instrumental) or prayer, or it is directed to the congregation as some sort of challenge or encouragement or exhortation to them. When someone is put on stage as a soloist or in a group, we are, in essence, putting them into a position of temporary leadership in the service. There is an unspoken assumption that we bless what they are saying and singing and that their lives represent what we stand for as a church (followers of Jesus Christ). Therefore, we will choose people who we believe are ready for this kind of responsibility.

We believe that worship music ministry is a sacred privilege that should be taken seriously by those involved. Living a lifestyle of obedience and worship to Christ and His word is very important for those involved in this ministry.

We believe that part of worship ministry includes encouraging the involvement of youth and children in worship services and events related to worship ministry whenever possible and being available to provide help and resources when needed. Again, these opportunities are not to showcase the talent of our youth and children, but to help them learn to understand and grow in the worship of God through the development and use of their God-given gifts and talents.

We believe that our worship is opposed by very real enemies (the devil, his demons, the world, and our own flesh). While taking care not to allow these to steal our focus

away from God, we will be aware of the devil's schemes and tactics, worldly mindsets, and the sins of the flesh and be quick to pray, seek God for help, and repent of any sin.

Please read and sign for each question.

I have read through the Philosophy of Worship, understand it, and am willing to be lovingly held accountable to its principles.

Name_____

Date_____

I understand that integrity in leadership matters to God. I understand that the leadership of Hope Church deeply cares about me and the health of our whole church and so has the responsibility and right before God to lovingly speak to these issues in my life. I understand that being inconsistent with these guidelines could possibly result in being asked to step down from worship ministry temporarily if I am in a place in my life where I need ministry myself before I can effectively minister to others.

Name_____

Date_____