



A STATE OF THE HEART

WORSHIP TEAMS AT OAK HILLS CHURCH

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Worship Team at Oak Hills Church. The opportunity to serve God and others in this way—especially up front—is a true privilege that is taken seriously at Oak Hills, and we truly appreciate your sharing your gifts and talents in this very special calling. Our role is to help people experience God not only through our music, but our worship leading and the example of our lives.

This document is intended to not only give some general guidelines for the team, but in a larger sense, it paints a picture of who we are, and how we see God's calling manifested in our ministry. For purposes of this brochure, the Worship Team is defined as the bands and vocal teams which regularly minister at our services. We consider both instrumentalists and vocalists to be worship leaders.

THE LEVITICAL HEART We often talk about the Levitical heart. The Levites were the tribe set apart by God to lead worship and conduct the duties of the tabernacle for all of the nation Israel (II Chronicles). It was a holy calling, ushering the people into a transcendent experience with God. This calling was one marked by a life of worship, servanthood, excellence, community, grace, and a heart that is ever growing towards Him. The Worship Team is about all of these things.

A GROWING HEART COMES FIRST At Oak Hills, our goal is to invite people to experience the reality of life in the Kingdom of God. Imagine how life would be if every person at Oak Hills experiences intimacy with God regularly. Radical life change would be normal, sharing our faith would occur naturally from the abundance of our lives, and vibrant worship would be the result of the spontaneous outpouring of a full heart.

We have the very special privilege of helping others enter into Kingdom experiences through worship. But in order to authentically point people to God, we first have to have these experiences ourselves. That's why the foundational value of our team is to grow our own hearts first. We must have Levitical hearts that are loving God and loving people more and more each day. And the expectation is that each person on the team will be applying disciplines that will foster their hearts to grow spiritually. That includes being a part of our Worship Team community, having regular personal experiences of worship throughout the week, and serving in ministries that are out of the limelight.

LIVING A LIFE OF WORSHIP We sometimes use the analogy of a waiter in a restaurant to describe the role of the worship leader. The waiter's job is to help the diner have a great experience with the meal, from the time they sit down to the time they leave. A good waiter knows it isn't about them. It's about the food and the experience of the diner. So they are attentive, serving, and helpful, but not overbearing or self-absorbed. In the same way, worship leaders guide the others and help them "taste and see that the Lord is good."

But there's another aspect to this analogy. Before the diner enters the restaurant, a good waiter has already tasted everything on the menu. So they can honestly say that the food is great, and they can serve others first since they've already eaten. The true worship leader worships all week long. They minister from a full heart. Their personal worship life is rich and deep. They know that God is good, and it

is their desire that the congregation experience Him. This is a high expectation on the Worship Team—that we are fostering Levitical hearts where worship is a lifestyle, and not something we do once a week.

SERVANTHOOD We have a saying at Oak Hills that goes, “It’s not about me.” But as musicians who have talents and gifts, it’s easy to forget that. The worship leader is a servant leader. Our role is to bring people to the throne of God, not stand in the way of it.

A. W. Tozer tells a story that goes like this: Jesus fulfilled scripture when he rode a young donkey into Jerusalem in John 12:12-16. The great crowds came to meet him, taking palm branches and spreading them out before him, praising his name, shouting “Hosanna! Hosanna!” The donkey, looking around at the crowd, then thought to himself, “Wow! I must really be great!”

Our goal is to lead people in worship, and stay out of the way. Just because you have a great voice, or you can play some great licks, doesn’t mean that you should show them off. Remember that our playing and singing should enhance the worship, not be the focus of worship. So you’ll hear us say things like this:

- “Less is more.” Know what not to play and when not to play it. Similarly, “When in doubt, lay out.”
- “Play the spaces.” Allow the song to breathe, and don’t play every fill or every rest.
- “Blending.” All vocalists should sound as one voice. Don’t stick out, and don’t solo (unless you’re supposed to).
- “Listen!” A good band is connected together with their ears. Bass listens to kick drum, electric guitar listens to the acoustic guitar, keys listens to the piano, percussion listens to the drummer, vocalists listen to one another and the leader, etc.
- “Fly in formation.” Be sensitive to where the worship leader is taking you—in the worship set, within the song arrangement, in the ebb and flow of dynamics, and in spiritual sensitivity.
- “Let’s move on.” Sometimes the monitor mix won’t be great. It’s appropriate to point it out, but don’t dwell on it. Learn how to minister with grace and humility in an imperfect environment.
- “It’s not about you.” This is self-explanatory. No prima donna attitudes are tolerated.

These statements aren’t just musical directions. They are reminders to make our worship about the worship, and not about us. Remember—in the grand scheme of things, we’re just the donkey. Let’s always strive to have a servant’s heart, and make sure our motivations are pure (not only when we lead people in worship, but in our rehearsals, our sound checks, and any time we minister).

This also pertains to receiving constructive criticism. A servant knows that what you do and how well you do it is not tied to who you are in Christ. In order to do what we do, constructive criticism must be given and received in a Christ-like manner.

Servanthood also applies to being off-stage as well. As a team, we will have opportunities to serve together in areas where God can grow our hearts (e.g., Children’s Ministries). We expect people on the Worship Team to take advantage of these ministry opportunities. And as individuals, we also have the expectation that everyone serve in an off-stage capacity as well.

EXCELLENCE You may occasionally hear us use the term, “excellence.” Although it has become one of those overused buzzwords, excellence is really a biblical principle. God deserves excellence. In the same way that God required the unblemished lamb as a sacrifice, so should you consider your art a sacrifice to God. We need never apologize for excellence in our music, as long as it is for the right reasons. So

let's define "excellence." Excellence is doing the best you can with what God gave you. It's not about perfectionism or about being unrealistic in our musical expectations.

Well, what does this mean practically? For one, it means being "professional" in the way we approach our craft. Be at rehearsals on time. If you have a scheduling conflict, arrange for your own replacement, and then let us know. Be courteous and grateful to the tech people and help them get the best sound possible from you. If you are an instrumentalist, be ready to sound check at the scheduled time. Bring a pencil (and use it!). Address your comments to the Music Director, and don't start firing off directions to the band or Tech Team. And please, no playing around (unless Manuel starts it). It is also a general policy that no one is allowed to play or sing if they have not attended practice or rehearsed separately with the MD.

It also means practicing your music, to the point that the music doesn't impede your personal worship or your ability to follow the cues and nuances of the worship. Vocalists are strongly encouraged to memorize the lyrics whenever possible, so that you can better enter into worship and model it in front of our congregation. We will also have periodic workshops for vocalists, instrumentalists, etc., and we also encourage private lessons (especially vocalists—we could all use some!). Don't take the gifts and talents you have for granted; steward them by practicing your craft.

Finally, we suggest you pray through your lyrics (especially those doing solos). Praise God and dedicate the songs to Him. This ensures that you aren't in "performance mode," but your heart is ready to meet God in worship.

COMMUNITY The time that we share together as a community cannot be overemphasized. It is in community that we can be Christ to one another before we take the stage and be Christ to the congregation. Community is where we have fun together, share our lives together, pray for one another, care for one another, and challenge one another toward spiritual growth.

With some exceptions, the expectation is that all Worship Team members participate in community—during small group times, rehearsals, etc. Specifically, that means:

- Rehearsals: ...Are not only about learning the music. Rehearsals are also a time where we connect with one another, and often we will have devotional times too.
- Sunday Attendance: In addition to your normal scheduled rotation, we expect everyone to regularly attend our weekend services. This is not only about worshipping God; it is about being a leader in the pew. There is also the expectation that when you are in the congregation, you will pray for those on stage. Praying for other team members means others are praying for you.
- Community Events: There will also be other community times as well, (e.g., concerts, workshops, retreats, and internal and outside ministry opportunities), where attendance will be strongly suggested.
- Choir Attendance: Our policy is that Worship Team vocalists also participate in the choir (which rehearses every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.) with certain exceptions. Please understand that we don't want the perception that there is a "two-tiered" system or that we play favorites.
- While not required, we do encourage participation in our small groups or MSGs (medium sized gatherings) as a means of fostering community and spiritual growth.

There is one more aspect of community that must be taken seriously by everyone on the team: conflict resolution. We're all human, and we will have times of disagreement and misunderstanding with others on the team. And conflict can be an area of growth and bonding, as long as we have the goal of being "like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (Phil 2:2). We expect anyone on the

team who has differences with another believer to follow Jesus' procedure for resolving conflict as stated in Matthew 18:15-17. This is a nonnegotiable for those on the Worship Team—we must be courageous in dealing with conflict, in order that we minister with unity.

GRACE God calls us to be a grace-filled community. We endeavor to be a team that shows love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control toward one another. The opposite of this, of course, would include having a critical spirit, sharing gossip, harboring bitterness, being impatient, being quick to anger, or being self-serving. Ultimately, what we do comes from who we are. The quality of our worship comes from the purity of our hearts. And showing grace to one another should come as a result of someone who's heart has been captured by grace.

A HIGH CALLING We'll be blunt here. Because of the high calling of this ministry, we believe that there are reasons why and seasons when a person should not be on the Worship Team. There are many legitimate reasons for this: family situations, sin issues, talent issues, time commitments and priorities, or even seasons when God may seem far away from you. We trust that each person on the Worship Team will be authentic as they go through their life journey, and let us know where they stand. And we will work with them through the process. There is no lack of honor in taking oneself off the team if circumstances dictate. Quite the opposite—it shows great maturity. Just as God can call you into a ministry, He will sometimes call you out. God will honor the person who highly prizes the privilege of leading worship in this way.

WORSHIP TEAM SIGN-UPS Serving on the Worship Team is a one-year commitment. Once a year, we plan to evaluate our teams, and meet with each Worship Team member as necessary. Based on calling, ability, and circumstances, we will ask you for a one-year commitment to the team. Of course, circumstances can change, and we will meet with you anytime you feel the need. Based on circumstances, we will revise the rotations as needed. If you have questions or comments about this brochure, please speak to Manuel Luz, Creative Arts Pastor, at 983-0181 or manuel.luz@oakhills.org.