

Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church

On Worship¹

- **Worship involves our entire lives** – It is 24/7 Adoration of the Lord. We present our whole lives as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. We worship because of God’s mercies and by God’s mercies. (Romans 12:1-21)

On the focus of worship

- **Worship must be God centered** - Worship is all about God and not about us. Christ is to be the object and subject. Worship is to be rooted in the Biblical revelation of God, proclaiming and enacting the victory of Christ over evil, ordering our relationship with God and our walk in the Spirit. We will show a high priority to the vertical focus of our Sunday morning service. (Philippians 1:20,21; Psalm 42:1,2.)
- **Worship expects the powerful presence of God.** We do not just direct ourselves toward him. We earnestly seek His drawing near us according to the promise of James 4:8. (*Come near to God and He will come near to you.*) We believe that in worship God draws near to us in power, and makes Himself known and felt for our good and for the salvation of unbelievers in the midst. (Psalm 63:1-6.)
- **Worship includes both the head and the heart:** Worship must aim at kindling and carrying deep, strong, real emotions toward God, appealing to clear thinking about spiritual things based on shareable evidences outside ourselves. Worship does not manipulate people's emotions but will anticipate the working of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The way we worship shapes the way we believe. Hence, worship is to be a continued rehearsal of our relationship with God, with God’s presence in creation, in history, in Christ and in the gathered community. Worship is experienced through Word and through expression. In worship our relationship with God is reestablished, maintained, repaired and transformed. Worship shapes our view of the world, our values and our hope. In worship we encounter God; we engage in dialogue with God. (Matthew 15:1-9.)
- **Worship must be Bible based and Bible saturated:** The content of our singing, praying, welcoming, preaching and poetry must always conform to the truth of Scripture. The content of God’s Word will be woven through all we do in worship just as it is the ground of our appeal to authority in faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12)
- **Worship results in transformation and response:** The worship experience must lead to challenge and to response, to a transformed life. The New Testament describes the gathered church by describing the actions and the lives of the members. Members are challenged to offer up the “spiritual sacrifice” that results in transformed lives seeking the “good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Isaiah 1:12-17, Micah 6:6-8, Romans 12:1,2)

¹ Many of the statements in this philosophy were adapted from the Desiring God Website and John Piper’s work. By John Piper. © Desiring God. Website: www.desiringGod.org. Email: mail@desiringGod.org. Toll Free: 1.888.346.4700.

On leading in worship

- **Undistracting Excellence** – In leading worship, we will sing, pray, play, preach and speak in such a way that nothing will impair a natural, undistracting excellence that will let the truth and beauty of God shine through. We will set an example of reverence and passion; we will exhibit wonder and joy. We will focus on providing an atmosphere for radically personal encounters with God’s truth. We will seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit. *“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:17)*

On choices of style in worship

- **Our worship choices will be characterized by a graceful respect to others.** The 2000 year history of the church has confirmed many differing systems of worship as Biblically valid ways of encountering God in community. Notwithstanding differing worship preferences, our God-centered focus requires us to demonstrate a spirit of love for each other as we engage in authentic worship. Ephesians 5:21, 1 Corinthians 13
- **Our order of worship will demonstrate a careful balance and allocation of time:** The ordering of worship will include
 - 1) approaching and responding to God in praise and prayer (including corporate prayer led by the pastor or worship leader, corporate sung prayer and personal silent prayer);
 - 2) hearing from God in the proclamation of the Word; and
 - 3) a challenge for service—sacrifice—to God (including opportunities for service in giving, in participation in service during the time of worship and as continued service in transformed lives as we leave the sanctuary.) (Ephesians 5:19,20; Colossians 3:16;17; 1 Corinthians 14:15;16; 1 Timothy 4:13.)
- **Our music choices will include a blending of good historic and good contemporary music.** “Good” is defined as including words that are theologically sound and music that is able to be sung congregationally. *And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Matt. 13:52)*
- **Our worship will provide for intergenerational participation** - We will affirm young, middle and older musicians, singers and participants. We will include children and youth in our worship services to encourage all generations worshipping the Lord together.

Guidelines for Worship Coordinators, Worship Teams and Worship Technicians

In addition to the general philosophy of worship, the following guidelines apply to decisions affecting the worship teams, order of worship and qualifications for participation in worship ministries.

- The Elders will prepare guidelines regarding corporate worship.
- The Elders shall approve (and may remove) Worship Team Leaders. We are putting these individuals in front of the congregation in a prominent role; hence, it is vital to ensure they are right with the Lord and with the congregation to the best of our knowledge. Consideration for approval will follow interview and recommendation by the worship coordinators.
- A worship leader will be
 - >capable of rapport and communication with the congregation;
 - >skilled in singing and in leading singing;
 - >experienced in programming so as to design and to lead the congregation in the worship experience and to lead up to and complement the proclamation of the Word.
- The worship coordinators shall assess persons for participation in worship ministries; candidates shall have, first, a growing relationship with Christ; then, the necessary level of musical or technical gifting.
- Worship leaders and their teams will be expected to work under the Holy Spirit's leadership and in respectful consultation with the pastor and worship coordinators in the design of the worship service.
- The worship coordinators, with appropriate support from the elders, will work with the worship leaders in developing strategies and techniques to assist the congregation in singing and the worship teams in leading singing.