

Desiring the Charismatic

Paul encourages the church in Corinthian to "eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 14:1). That's the kind of church we want to be—a truly charismatic church, a church that eagerly desires the gifts of the Spirit, in all of our corporate worship contexts.

We believe the Holy Spirit is the true worship leader. His ministry is to reveal Jesus, impart faith to the church to believe Jesus, to cause us to be amazed by Jesus, and build up the church through the gifts he graciously gives his people. That sounds like the kind of things I want to do as a worship leader.

Our role as worship leaders isn't simply to execute a plan well and blast through a carefully curated set-list. It is to create space within our gathered moments for the Holy Spirit to lead.

Charismatic worship isn't defined by extended musical moments or people singing spontaneous songs. It isn't a musical genre (despite what Spotify might like to suggest). It's the gathered people of God, anchored on the eternal revelation of God in Scripture, bringing what the Holy Spirit has given them for the building up of the church. We want to believe that what the Holy Spirit wants to do is always better than what we could manufacture ourselves.

So how do we lead in a way that helps people step into truly charismatic worship?

Desire it yourself

If we want our church to eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit, we need to desire them ourselves.

Ask the Holy Spirit to work in and through you and submit to him when he leads. Pursue the gifts privately as well as publicly and be willing to step out in faith when he prompts you. People are often encouraged to pursue what they see modelled.

Leave Space and don't rush

It's easy to become so focused on the plan that we miss what the Holy Spirit is doing, but Bob Kauflin's helpful definition reminds us that a worship leaders is someone who "through the power of the Holy Spirit...[motivates] the gathered church...to cherish God's presence".

Family life can be busy and at time overwhelming. If I'm not careful, I can so easily miss many of the good and cherish-able moments of time with my family because I'm too busy trying to achieve my plan and get through my check list. I don't hear what my children are trying to say to me because of my desire get stuff done and control the order of play. I don't want to be like that with my family...and I really don't want to be like that with the Holy Spirit.

As we lead others in worship, we need to slow down, stop rushing through our plan. Leave space to listen to the Holy Spirit. Leave space to wait. Leave space for cherishing God's presence.

As leaders we decide to do that. What the Holy Spirit does with that space is up to him. But we can plan in space, plan in time to listen. Put it in your set list.

Lead with ears and eyes open

Leading worship means paying attention to what's happening in the room.

Keep your eyes open to see how people are responding and to notice what other leaders are communicating. I know that so much of what God is doing week by week is not visible to your eye, but it sometimes is. Don't miss the stuff God might be doing because you've got your eyes closed the whole time.

Keep your ears open to hear the prayers, Scriptures, prophetic words and other charismatic contributions that may help shape where the meeting goes.

Leading into the charismatic requires listening as much as singing or playing.

Take moments to explain and teach

Not everyone in the room will be familiar with charismatic worship, and that's okay.

Simple explanations can help people understand what they're experiencing and see that the gifts of the Spirit are rooted in Scripture, not simply a particular church culture or style.

A brief explanation at the right moment can remove unnecessary barriers and help people engage with confidence rather than confusion.

As worship leaders, we're not simply leading songs—we're helping the church become a people who eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit and make room for him to work among us.