

Leading a Band

Leading a worship band is about much more than making music. As leaders, we're called to serve the people around us so that, together, we can serve the church well. Over the years, I've found it helpful to think about leading a band in three stages: the pre-work, on the day, and the post-work.

Pre-Work

Good band leadership begins long before playing the first song.

One of the simplest ways to serve your team is through clear and early communication. Sending out songs in order well in advance (to the Production team as well!), along with keys, BPMs, arrangement ideas, chord charts, and links to recordings, gives people the opportunity to prepare well.

The goal isn't to overwhelm people with information but to give them exactly what they need to serve confidently. You can't control when everyone practises, but you can set the culture by preparing well yourself and doing all you can to equip your team to do the same.

Early preparation also creates space for collaboration. It gives your team time to ask questions, offer ideas, and contribute creatively before you're in the room together.

On the Day

Every time we lead worship is an opportunity to lead by serving.

Arrive early, settle yourself, help create a calm environment, set up your own equipment so that you can be ready to lend a hand with setting up for others. Pray together before you play, remembering that worship is first about our hearts before it's about our music.

During the meeting, communicate clearly with your band. Having pre-decided hand signals, vocal cues, or even active WhatsApp groups enables you to communicate your next steps. Don't be afraid to slow down and speak to one another if needed—good communication is far more valuable than trying to appear polished.

And when the meeting is over, don't rush off. Help tidy the stage, reset equipment, and leave things tidier than it was when you arrived ready for the next team. Small acts of service help shape the culture of a worship team.

Post-Work

Your leadership continues after you're packed up and ready to go home.

Take time to encourage your team intentionally. Celebrate what went well and create an environment where honest, constructive feedback is welcomed. Healthy teams grow because leaders are willing to learn, adapt, and help others develop.

It's also worth thinking ahead to the next time you lead together. Who could you encourage into greater responsibility? Who shows potential to pick or lead songs, organise rehearsals, or musically direct? One of the greatest privileges of leadership is helping others grow in their gifts.

Final Thoughts

Strong worship teams are built on relationships as much as rehearsals. Investing time together outside of services builds trust, friendship, and musical understanding that can't be manufactured during a rehearsal. Eat together, go to gigs together, open your lives to each other.

Ultimately, leading a band isn't about being the best musician in the room. It's about serving others with humility, preparing faithfully, and creating an environment where the whole team can help lead God's people in worship.