

Sound Culture

1. Purpose of This SOP

This SOP defines the culture, values, and expectations for how our worship service should sound every Sunday at Community of Faith. It aligns our team around intentional, distraction-free audio that supports worship and connects people with Jesus.

We do not mix personal preference — we mix with purpose.

2. The Culture of COF Sound

As we serve, we inhabit the crew culture **GIFT — Greet, Initiate, Follow Up, and Thank**. This is how we lead, how we interact with people, and how we carry ourselves as a team. Our culture is also built around creating a **distraction-free worship environment** that connects our Communities to the person of Jesus.

- **We Care About What People Hear**

Sound shapes the worship experience. Clear, intentional audio helps people worship. Distracting or unstable audio pulls them away.

- **We Make Decisions That Serve the Room**

Everything we do is based on what the congregation needs to **hear**, not what we personally prefer.

- **We Value Consistency**

No matter who mixes, the room should hear a dependable and recognizable “COF sound.”

- **We Mix With Intention, Not Habit**

Every audible decision has purpose behind it.

3. Pre-Prep — *Greet*

Pre-Prep is how we “Greet” both the **worship team** and the **congregation** — long before anyone enters the building. Preparation is hospitality.

It communicates:

“We value what God is going to do here, so we prepare the room, the service, and ourselves with excellence.”

- **Prep Before Sunday — Personal Greet**

Before we even arrive on Sunday, we prepare our hearts, our ears, and our understanding of what the service requires.

This includes:

- Listening to the songs for Sunday throughout the week
- Using **live worship recordings** as our reference (Elevation, Bethel, Gateway, Passion, Upper Room, Maverick City, etc.)
- Reviewing the **keys, BPMs, time signatures**, and **arrangements** the team plans to use
- Knowing which **vocalists** are leading so you can anticipate blend, tone, and placement
- Listening for how vocals sit above the instruments in the live recordings
- Listening for how instruments work together and support the vocals

This prepares us to greet the room and the team with confidence and clarity.

- **Prep When Arriving — Room Greet**

Before rehearsal begins, we prepare the environment so the worship team and congregation step into a ready, consistent space.

This includes:

- Sound system on and functioning
- Sunday show file loaded
- Batteries installed and checked
- Microphones and lines confirmed

This says:

“The room is ready, the service is ready, and you can trust the environment you’re stepping into.”

4. Foundation: Gain Structure (Our Starting Point)

Our Standard: Aim for -18 dB on Inputs

This number isn't about perfection — it's about creating:

- Clean, stable audio
- Headroom for musical dynamics
- Predictable consistency across volunteers and campuses

Context:

- **E-drums** often need hotter gain and will not clip.
- **Vocals** may sit slightly lower to avoid feedback.

A strong mix begins with predictable, stable gain set during pre-rehearsal sound check — this is a cultural expectation.

5. What Defines the COF Mix

- **The Mix Should Not Draw Audible Attention to Itself**

If people notice the sound instead of the worship moment, something is off. Sound supports the moment — it should never distract from it.

- **Vocals Lead What the Room Hears**

People sing when they can clearly hear the vocals. We ensure:

- Lead vocals are easily heard and understood
- Background vocals support without competing
- Instruments sit under the vocal and do not overpower it

- **Transitions Should Sound Smooth and Stable**

The room should never hear abrupt or surprising audio moments.

This means:

- Microphones are on at the correct time
- Transitions between songs and speaking are stable and natural
- Levels stay consistent and predictable

Smooth transitions allow the congregation to stay focused and engaged.

- **The Mix Should Sound Like Live Worship Recordings**

Our sound aligns with modern live worship recordings — the worship sound people know and engage with during the week.

We reference artists such as:

- Elevation Worship
- Bethel Music
- Gateway Worship
- Passion
- Upper Room
- Maverick City Music

Live worship recordings model:

- Clear leading vocals
- Balanced instrumentation
- Musical energy
- Consistency Sunday to Sunday

This helps the congregation engage confidently and immediately.

- **We Mix Based on What the Room Hears**

We mix the room, not the console.

We listen to:

- The front of the room
- The back
- The sides
- The center

If the room hears clarity and balance, we are winning.

6. Expectations During Rehearsal — *Initiate*

Rehearsal is where we *initiate* excellence, set the tone for the day, and build the mix foundation.

During rehearsal we:

- Set gains before the first run-through
 - Build the mix around the vocals
 - Listen to the full blend rather than isolating channels
 - Address issues kindly, quickly, and clearly
 - Establish transitions and speaking levels early
 - Create stability before the congregation arrives
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7. Expectations During the Service — *Follow Up*

During the service, we “Follow Up” on the foundation we built in rehearsal — staying engaged, refining the mix, and supporting worship in real time.

During service we:

- Remain fully focused on what the room is hearing
- Adjust levels as songs, dynamics, and room energy shift
- Maintain clear speaking levels
- Protect the room’s listening experience through intentional volume
- Ask the key question:
If something didn’t sound right, why?

This keeps us aligned with our culture and attentive to the needs of the room.

8. After-Service Debrief — *Thank*

We honor the team by offering meaningful and specific feedback — not vague affirmations.

Our Debrief Questions (With Required Detail):

- **Did anything distract the room? What exactly was heard?**
- **Were vocals clearly heard at all times? Where did clarity change?**
- **Did transitions sound smooth and stable? Which moments need improvement?**
- **Did the mix match the live worship sound we aim for? What matched? What didn't?**
- **Did the audio help people stay engaged with Jesus? Why or why not?**

We give honest detail because it helps us grow — and specific feedback shows genuine gratitude.

9. The Heart Behind It All

We are worship leaders through sound.

We shape what people **hear**, not to impress, but to guide them toward Jesus.

Our win is simple:

Clear, consistent, distraction-free sound that helps people worship.

Through Greet, Initiate, Follow Up, and Thank, we reflect the culture of our church and lead with purpose.