

Planning a Worship Time – Rachel McConnachie

The Two Tensions

1. It's not about the songs; God can use anything.
2. It's all about the songs. Songs teach theology so they are very important.

These two tensions are not mutually exclusive. It's all about balance. Choosing great songs is only half the job. It's HOW we lead those songs (which includes our arrangements, how they sit next to other songs) that often makes the difference.

Preparation

To lead anything well, preparation is key. As leaders, we need to be willing to put in extra work during the week outside of rehearsals and Sunday services (or whenever your gathering is).

Important questions to ask:

- Who am I leading?
- Who is my band?
- Where are we going?
- What is the Spirit saying?

Putting Together your Setlist

- Use a variety of song 'shapes'
- Mix old with new
- Don't be afraid to add in a very simple chorus or tag among more complicated songs

Practise by yourself or with a buddy

Worship through your set, give yourself time. See where the songs take you. Pray and ask God to breathe new life on each song.

Plan transitions

The way you move from one song to another can make or break a set.

Tips for transitions

- Use related keys
- Use the same key
- Use one note on the keyboard that is common to both keys
- Drum click over the previous song - band in strong on first beat
- Nominate a instrument to figure it out

Practise with your band

- Pray & worship together
- Always practise the transitions

At this stage you may start to get sick of the songs you've chosen but that's okay! It's a normal part of planning a worship time. Usually we get the sick of the songs a lot earlier than the people we're leading so don't worry.

Tips on Song Selection

Singability

Some songs are great to listen to but not that great for congregational singing. It's important to know the difference.

How do you know if a song is singable?

Simple! Sing it through from beginning to end. Verse, chorus, bridge etc. All of it! And I don't mean sing it along with the recording. The song must still make sense when it's just one person singing with one instrument as accompaniment (or maybe a small group with a guitar). When thinking about introducing a new song, always try it out by yourself at home with your instrument.

Notes on Range

The average congregation member's range is from A below middle C to top D. Obviously guys and girls have slightly different ranges but these, in my view, are the common notes between them. For a song to be really singable, it really needs to fit within this range.

NZ Music

Check out Edge Kingsland, Mount Mosaic and St Paul's Symonds St – these churches are producing some great kiwi worship music!

Online Resources

The best lead sheets & chord charts – praisecharts.com or nz.songselect.com

Free lead sheets & MP3's + an excellent search function - worshiptogether.com

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me – rachel@southcityc3.org.nz