

Music Leadership Presence

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It's easy to find a book on leadership in the bookstore. It's not so easy to find a book on music leadership - especially when it comes to "stage" presence, a term I use very cautiously. While true Christian leadership demands humility, true humility results from a desire to serve. And yes, the motivation to serve can be perceived in body language, facial expressions, and voice. Think back to worship gatherings you've experienced in the past. The majesty and praise of God should be first on our hearts, but were you distracted from it for any reason because of the leaders? Did the leaders seem to want attention or were they pointing it back to the cross?

The desire to serve does not come naturally, and I'm sure you're quite familiar with the human ego. We crave recognition. There is no formula to conjure up a service mode except the age old way of confessing and being forgiven. We need to go to the source: Christ. Once the servant heart is in place, there are a few practical things to remember while on stage.

First of all, situate musicians to see everyone. It is necessary for communication so that choruses are not repeated unnecessarily, vocalists follow the instrumentalists and vice versa, pages are not turned loudly, and the leader can lead. The less confusion on stage, the more focus on the source of our worship

Secondly, think about outer appearances. When you dress in the morning, dress with a servant heart and use common sense. Take a water bottle on stage with you, but don't gulp excessively at awkward moments. Be discreet. If logistics require the music leaders to leave the stage to sit in a designated area, do so quietly and in an appropriate time of the service (rather than a prayer). Be focused on what's happening during the worship time.

Finally, facial expression and body language is key. I've seen leaders look extremely bored. They stood stiffly straight like a wooden board and stared blankly into our faces. The emotions were somehow transferred and I felt like I was part of a funeral religion, mourning the death of our Savior rather than celebrating His resurrection. It shouldn't be that way! Even during a service that is centrally focused on a Lenten theme or a somber event, it is possible to maintain a look of awareness. Be present in the service. Raise eyebrows, sway slightly, lift your hands, and if you feel strange looking into the faces in front of you, stare at the back of the church. Or perhaps, most importantly, focus your gaze on the cross or the area in your sanctuary that reminds you of Him. There is nothing more powerful that we can think on.

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