

The Intense Spiritual Power of Waiting on God in Worship

“My soul, wait silently for God, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my refuge; I will not be moved” (Ps. 62:5-6).

Recently, I got together with a worship leader friend of mine for lunch and we soon found ourselves on our favorite topic: worship! While we were talking, she said something I already knew, but the way she said it really stuck with me: “Worship is in the waiting.”

This morning, I was watching a worship video by a well-known worship ministry on YouTube, and at the point where most teams would end the song, this worship group kept the music going in the background for quite a while. I know from personal experience that when it comes to being on stage, dead time—when there is pretty much nothing happening—can be a recipe for disaster. Especially if the music stops and you find yourself riffling through chord charts to get to the next song if you feel God is taking the service a different direction than you had planned. Nobody wants to have that awkward silence when everyone is looking around wondering what will be happening next and why nothing is happening right now.

Back to the song I was listening to. The worship leader just waited; he didn't start singing random things in the mic to fill up the dead space. He didn't “introduce” the next song to cue everyone into what the next song would be. (This is one of my pet peeves, it's just not needed for every song!) None of that. He just waited in the presence of the Lord; and this is where I feel we often miss out on a huge blessing.

Slowly, in that soft time of waiting, the outpouring started to happen. The congregation all began singing the chorus of

the song again, joined by the worship team, and it built such a momentum that the final few minutes of the video had such a powerful presence of the Holy Spirit, so much so that I wanted to watch it several more times. What an amazing time for worship they would have missed out on if the worship leader had just moved on to the next item on the agenda!

“I waited patiently for the Lord, and He turned to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet on a rock, and established my steps” (Ps. 40:1-2).

I understand that there are schedules that need to be kept and things that need to happen in a service; I am on a worship team, so I get it. But true worship is found in the waiting. It is in those moments when people can be healed, set free, get new direction for their lives and have divine experiences that impact their future. How sad if we never linger in the presence of the Lord and let Him work! That’s really what we are there for, right?

There have been times while leading worship that I got a burning sense that God was not done with a song yet. Many times, it came not too long before I would have normally ended that song and gone to the next one. I have found that when I am obedient and wait, good things come. Sometimes I start writing a new song right there on stage as I sing lyrics God is dictating to me during that time of waiting. Sometimes He gives me an exhortation, something to encourage the congregation to do or say. Normally I end up going back into the song, maybe slightly in a different way than I did before as this new revelation comes about where God is taking the people through that particular song or in that special moment.

If you are a worship leader, I want to encourage you to take time to wait on the Lord. The next time you get that sense that God has more to do with a song, get to a place where you can wait. Train your team during practice to just hold on to a

chord or simple chord progression. You might have to turn the tracks off to do this if you use them, but believe me, you won't regret it! If you are a pastor, communicate to your worship team that you want them to feel free to take a few moments to wait on the Lord if they feel led to. They won't know that it's OK unless you give them the freedom to. I know it can't happen all the time, but I believe that there are special moments coming soon in worship that you don't want to miss, and I would love to hear about it when they happen! {eoa}

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