

To Declare His Word

Why Scripture-based declaration in worship can bring unity and change the atmosphere

As a worship leader, I'm always thinking about what I can do in a church service to encourage a response toward Jesus. My heart, as I lead, is focused on guiding people to Him.

I like to remind our team that the purpose of the platform is service. We serve the people we are leading, even as we serve God, who has entrusted us with the platform. In every service at Hillsong Church, those attending represent vastly different lives and situations. Every week, individuals face countless challenges and real problems. It's the worship team's responsibility, then, to serve those in attendance by drawing their attention from their situations and circumstances to the One who has the power to bring comfort and change to their lives.

Scripture is a great unifier. We could go on for hours encouraging the congregation to sing or lift their hands, but nothing provokes a unified, faith-filled response like the declaration of Scripture. When the entire congregation is gathered in agreement around the words of God, the atmosphere of the entire room lifts.

At the start of a service, I often quote verses like Matthew 18:19-20, which says, "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (NIV), or Psalm 100:4, which says, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."

When we commence a time of worship by quoting Scripture, everyone focuses around the same thought. Nothing can gather and encourage a congregation better than the Word He has given

us!

The power of Scripture in worship is also true when it comes to the songs we sing. Songs that are rooted in God's Word have a real power to them, and it's seldom difficult to get the congregation to respond to them. When we give people the opportunity to sing the Scriptures together in agreement, this builds faith and expectancy for what God will do.

A song we made available to churches this past Easter, called "Man of Sorrows," does exactly that. The final verse reads, "See the stone is rolled away/Behold the empty tomb/Hallelujah! God be praised!/He's risen from the grave." When our church sings this song—especially at Easter services—an enormous roar and cheer wells up as they sing the final verse and chorus. These kind of songs have a real impact on the atmosphere of a service. After all, there is no higher name than the name of Jesus!

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