

# Worship: A Pastor's Perspective

Every now and then as a pastor I get an opportunity to scan the faces of my church family in worship. I know many of them well as they struggle through life. And then there are many I don't know or only know vaguely. Many that I know are amazingly rising up to worship despite cancer, job loss, rebel sons, seizures, and divorce. They are the same hearts that Jesus wept over as He scanned the streets of Jerusalem. I'm sure there are floods of issues and heartaches under the surface, just as there are in my personal world.

Only God knows the heart but so often I see people that I love lazily letting the worship happen around them. I don't know about you, but it bothers me. Do they come for the band? Their friends? Their kids? Their spouse? Or do they come expecting God? Maybe they're just bored and want to make some sort of connection. When I'm around a few of my members I feel more like a caterer than a minister. Can you relate? Comments such as...

too loud  
too old  
too hot  
too cold  
too long standing

...slowly wear us down.

The heart of worship is not a sterile crusade for logic and pretences.

It's not a frantic carnival of human opinion about God.

It's far from a celebration of human talent and exhibition.  
It is the reckless pursuit of something more dangerous and

pure than anything we can see with our eyes. Opinions, competition and control wreck the longing for the heart of worship because they just point back to who we are. Worship sinks deeply into our existence to proclaim who He is. The heart of worship surrenders all the formulaic traditions. It lays siege to every idle attempt to control the outcome. We are ambushed by mercy, propelled into awareness and stripped of pride.

Maybe this is why so many Christians refuse to worship. We are comforted by the tactile-the things we can see and touch like spiritual spreadsheets that unconsciously assess whether the believer is a “good man” or a “bad man.” Our hearts too often long for check-the-box, jump through hoops religion because it allows us a bit of control and rational compromise. When we worship, God takes a sledge hammer to our scales, rulers, and formulas. It’s all futile, even comic. But when we really make the heart connection with God, stuff happens. Spiritual mutations occur that allow us to experience ecstasy in the midst of our brokenness and confusion. Everything really *is* stripped away. Worship becomes resurrection and it is best done in groups. That’s my longing as a worship leader- to see groups healed and transformed when they pour everything out. I long to see personal alabaster jars crushed. It’s truly is all about Him. And if it’s not then maybe we should all resign, step aside and go back to work at the widget factory.