



# worship

## church leadership resources

[sbtexas.com/healthsurvey](http://sbtexas.com/healthsurvey)

Based on the Church Health Assessment you completed, worship may be one area of needed growth for your church and/or church leadership. A healthy church is one that regularly experiences Spirit-filled, dynamic and participatory congregational worship, worship lifts our heads and hearts together to Almighty God as our greatest affection and first allegiance. In the **Explanation** section below, you will find several important biblical foundations for worship as it relates to church health.

Subsequent sections of this report will include **SBTC Resources/ Tools, Other Recommended Resources** and **Contacts**. All of these are designed to help strengthen your church in the area of worship. Please take time to read through this report and to share it with some key influential leaders in your church.



# explanation

**“Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Colossians 3:16**

In its broadest sense, “worship” refers to an intentional lifestyle of faithful, daily Christian experience. As the apostle Paul urged, we should “offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1). The Lord Jesus himself put the guardrails on a lifestyle of worship—“in spirit” on the one side and “in truth” on the other (John 4:23). In its broadest sense, worship is not something you can fit into a song or onto a bulletin. But whatever form biblical worship takes, in both individual or corporate experiences, it should be a sacrificial offering to God born of his spirit and anchored in his truth.

In assessing church health, we turn our attention now to the corporate dynamics of worship. A church should have at least one weekly worship service in which the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is remembered and celebrated through the singing of songs, the reading and proclamation of the Word, participation in the ordinances, the praying of prayers, and the opportunity to respond. A worship service may be more than these elements of programming, but it is not less than them.

## **Corporate Singing.**

Healthy churches focus more on the content of the songs than the musical style or the instruments on the stage. More on togetherness and singability than perfection or production. More on the richness of biblical truth than the entrancement of melodic lines or the allurements of rhythmic nuances. Melody, rhythm and beauty all come together in exceptional songs of congregational praise and worship. Excellence in musical production should always be a goal for those musically gifted by God. But it should not be idolized in congregational singing. Churches that are healthy create space for the musically gifted to serve without silencing the voices of those whose joyful noises are beautiful in the ears of the One who, with his own hands, created their vocal cords. Healthy churches sing from the overflow of an obedient lifestyle. Healthy churches allow the Word to shape their worship. Healthy churches don’t just sing about God; they sing to God. Healthy churches strive for musical excellence but do not idolize it. Healthy churches understand that no matter who is on stage, the congregation is the choir. Healthy churches sing with gratitude in their hearts instead of fighting over musical style.

## **The Reading and Preaching of the Word.**

The Word of God is of primary importance in the weekly worship gathering of a healthy church. It is read aloud, infused into prayers and songs and received as authoritative and sufficient for Christian faith and practice. The faithful preaching of the Word is essential. The healthy church is led by a healthy pastor who is gifted and anointed to proclaim the Word of God, to the people of God, anointed by the Spirit of God, always testifying to the Son of God. The pastor assumes the sacred desk every week for one reason alone: to faithfully re-present God’s Word to God’s people, giving them the meaning and helping them apply it to their lives. Unhealthy churches care more about the personality of the preacher than the work of the Word. Healthy churches come together, as a gathered body, thirsting for the Word like a deer pants

for water. Whether the Word brings conviction or confirmation, repentance or reassurance, judgment or joy, it is life-giving. Healthy churches value God's Word. They receive it with gratefulness to God.

### **Participation in the Ordinances.**

Before his ascension, the Lord Jesus left two ordinances to the local church for regular participation. Baptism is the initial, symbolic rite of entrance into the Christian family. It is a new believer's public profession of faith in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through immersion then emersion within the context of covenant Christian community, upon being born again by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the new believer identifies with the death of Christ and the life of Christ, committing himself or herself to the ongoing work of Christ through the church of Christ. The role of the congregation in the ordinance of baptism is to observe and celebrate. In the Lord's Supper ("Communion"), the gathered body of Christ partakes of the bread and the cup to remind themselves of the sacrificial death of their Savior and to be encouraged together that he is soon coming again. The role of the congregation in the Lord's Supper is to partake. Whether these two ordinances are practiced weekly or with some other form of regularity, they are essential to the health of the body of believers. Healthy churches observe the ordinances regularly, and in so doing, are reminded of both the fellowship of suffering and the promise of the second coming.

### **Corporate Prayer.**

A praying church is a powerful church. Prayer moves the heart of God and bends the will of man. In weekly worship services, church members join their hearts and their voices together in thanksgiving, petition and praise to God. In unhealthy churches, prayer is often nothing more than a transition between items on the order of worship. In healthy churches, prayer is made an intentional part of the order of worship. Intentional prayer during worship services often takes different forms. Sometimes there is a time of guided, individual prayer led by someone from the stage. Other times, one person prays aloud while others agree in their hearts and with their voices. It is appropriate at times to call for those who wish to be prayed over to present themselves before prayer warriors who lay hands on them, anoint them and pray for their specific needs. Sometimes congregational prayer takes the form of call and response while reading from a screen or from a printed resource. Congregational prayer does not have to take the same form every week. But it is undeniable that when healthy saints gather, they pray.

### **An Opportunity to Respond.**

We are instructed to be "doers of the word, not hearers only" (James 1:22). Every encounter with God's Word should produce some form of response within the faithful worshipper. The simple gospel should be faithfully presented in every worship gathering so that those who have come but never trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior will hear a clear and compelling presentation and then be given the opportunity to respond. The text of God's Word for the day should be comprehensibly exposed and applied so that those who are walking with Jesus know what to do with what they have heard. Whether the invitation is to come down front, go to the back, text this number or raise a hand, there should always be a clear next step given at the end of every worship gathering. Every encounter with the Word of God necessitates a response from the one who hears and listens. Healthy churches have well thought out times of response, trained counselors to assist those who respond and a clear and urgent plea for the convicted hearer to take the next step.

# sbtc tools & resources

## Equip Conference

This conference is designed for the local church and offers leadership training in all aspects of ministry, including worship.

## Lead Conference

This conference provides high school and college age students the opportunity to grow in the areas of worship, worship technology and leadership.

## SBTC Worship webpage

The landing page for all things SBTC worship ministry. Here, you can find contacts, networks, training events and more to help strengthen your church's weekly worship gathering.

## Rethink Worship

A webpage of resources for rethinking worship ministry in a post-COVID ministry context.

## SBTC Consultation

We have consultants available to come to your church and provide assistance in your worship ministry, sound, lighting and any other worship or A/V needs.

## other recommended resources

### Recommended Books/Articles:

#### Doxology and Theology: How the Gospel Forms

##### the Worship Leader

by Matt Boswell

##### Real Worship

by Warren Wiersbe

##### Corporate Worship

by Matt Merker and 9 Marks

##### Worship Matters

by Bob Kauflin

#### “Seven Thoughts on Corporate Worship”

by Tony Wolfe

### Worship Training/Methods:

#### Lead Conference

This conference provides high school and college age students the opportunity to grow in the areas of worship, worship technology and leadership.

#### Vertical Church: What Every Heart Longs For, What Every Church Can Be

by James McDonald.

# worship contacts

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the following contacts for encouragement, consultation or direction. It will be our joy to come alongside you as you lead your church to reach your community for Christ.

**Ray Jones** – [rjones@sbtxas.com](mailto:rjones@sbtxas.com)

Worship Consultant

**Jeff Lynn** – [jlynn@sbtxas.com](mailto:jlynn@sbtxas.com)

Senior Strategist for Church Health & Leadership

[Ministry Request Form](#) ([www.sbtxas.com/help](http://www.sbtxas.com/help))