



## Nailing the Basics: Service Leading

### 1. Introduction

*I often hear the misperception when I am invited to preach during a regular pastors absence from a local church. A lay leader will often orient me to the worship service with words similar to these: "I'll take care of the opening stuff, so that you can do the sermon." That 'opening stuff' is in most people's minds the requisite assortment of hymns and prayers that we need to churn through prior to the "real thing" - the sermon. The "stuff" that fills the time early in the service is considered only the prelude to the sermon, the opening act to the main event, or the pleasantries we need to get past so that we can get to the 'meat of the matter'. Typically no one thinks much about the opening stuff and no one is going to complain about it unless someone changes the traditional order, changes a familiar tune or forgets the offering. <sup>1</sup>*

Purpose of this seminar : To think about the 'opening stuff' and why each part of whole service has an important place

- To understand your heritage of “why we do what we do” (wwdx2)
- To build structures to
  - delegate and train
  - preserve that heritage
  - Do it better (however your church defines better)

### 2. Basic parts of a *Christian Church* service<sup>2</sup>

What is it	Why do it	Who did it	How do it
Adoration	Lift people up to recognise God's greatness and grace.	Pre-Reformation Reformation (inc Calvin and Luther) Modern times	Bible Verse Hymn of Praise Creed Doxology
Call	Exhort everyone to gather together as a church and get real about it	Present during reformation but became really explicit after Esp: Presbyterian and Reformed Churches	Bible Verse Song (“Come”) Creed

<sup>1</sup> B. Chapell, Christ-Centred Worship, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 18-19

<sup>2</sup> As opposed to a generic meeting that has a Christian sermon put into it (ie. Take out the sermon and bible and its just like a club meeting.)

		post reformation	
Confession	Openly and publicly acknowledge our sin and need for Grace	John Calvin especially put this in early in his services at Geneva but all have it (even pre-reformation)	In the 'Pastoral prayer' Silent prayer Elder-led prayer Some songs (eg 'Lead us back' by Sojourn Music) Music Solo
Assurance	Let everyone know that God has provided. He is gracious and we can go forward	In reformation and after this always came hot on the heels of a confession.	Scripture Reading Declaration by leader Hymn/Song Greeting each other with words of love and peace
Thanksgiving	Give a time to respond to this Assurance with joy, giving and obedience (because we are saved).	Esp in modern times (Rayburn, 1980) we find a time of singing and offerings as a thanksgiving	Regular offering Special collection Prayer of thanksgiving A Psalm Someone gives a testimony bible reading
Instruction	Give (Preach!) knowledge to grow in the Gospel and see lives changed	Pre-Reformation Reformation (inc Calvin and Luther) Modern times	Bible reading Sermon Word of encouragement Time of reporting back
Communion/Fellowship	Supply and feed people with Christ so they will be sustained. Celebrate how we are united with Jesus and each other	Pre-Reformation Reformation (inc Calvin and Luther) Modern times	Greetings Creeds Lords Prayer Baptism Communion Community Life announcements
Benediction/Charge	Send people away to really live in the light of God's grace	Pre-Reformation Reformation (inc Calvin and Luther) Modern times	Bible reading Benediction Exchange of Fellowship (dismissing each other with a word) Historic or contemporary verse or challenge

- An understanding of the Gospel will then be conveyed in the form/order as well as the content
- Many of us (or those leading our services) have never researched or thought through why we have the opening stuff.
- Though all these different groups in Christian history had a similar shape to their services there were and are big differences in the theology and content.

### **3. Setting up the Basics**

#### ***3.1 Sample meeting plans***

- This is where you create a template with some/all of the elements above.
- Different orders can highlight different aspects of the gospel/Christian life (eg repentance, challenge, Grace, praise)
- Talk with your service leaders about why we have them, which they should use that week/ month, how much they can vary, how they should vary.
- Goes hand in hand with 'Guidelines for the Meeting.' See below.

#### ***3.2 Guidelines for the meeting***

- This is a document that describes the vision vibe and values of your public meeting. In this document you'd put things like – theology of church, beliefs, values coming from this. These main ideas will influence things like aesthetics, participation, announcements, dress, items, formal/casual, venue which are also included.
- Use this document to present your case to those who need to be won over. Use it to train people in WWDx2. Use it to refine and change things. Give it to your church leadership (elders) as discussion and confirmation
- This is a living document.

#### ***3.3 Job Descriptions for key roles***

- These are a series of documents giving the details of each role in the church service. Each document will have the main tasks that must be done each week.
- Job Descriptions should/could be done for: Prayer, Bible Reader, “MC”, preacher, Band Leader, Band musician,
- These documents will draw on the 'Guidelines for the Meeting' see above.
- Use these documents for recruiting people to the role, refining that role, giving training and feedback, keeping people accountable
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### **4. Hints and Tips and Discussion to make these basics work**

- People who are always late don't yet have this picture of church. Meet up with them and show them. Better yet: get other leaders to meet up with them and show them.
- “Rubrics” (aka Segway)
- Sunday School has affected how many templates we can use because we need consistency

- Get Leaders rostered on for the month so they can have a good go at it
- Some people love job descriptions and guidelines, some people hate them. But in time we want all to understand and respect why we have them.
- People who say 'we don't have a plan for the church service' do still have a plan; its just one that is usually poorly formed, sloppy, unspoken.
- Send out meeting plan to all involved by Thurs.

## 5. Annotated Bibliography: Basics and Beyond

### 5.1 Resources you can use in making a service

- **B. Chapell, *Christ-Centred Worship*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009):** Part 2 gives resources you can then use in your service (actual words, bible verses, prayers, song lists, different orders from different denominations). This is a great resource if you are new to service leading or you want to learn to build a whole service that reflects the good news.
- **W. Brueggemann, *Awesome to Heaven Root to Earth*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003):** This is a book of prayers written out by a theologian. I don't like them all. Some of them are great. I use this as a basis for writing my own prayers and giving lots of thought to them. This is an example of what you can use to help in making a service.
- **D. A Carson (ed.), *Worship By the Book*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002):** Chapter 4 is by Keller he discusses 'traditional Vs Contemporary' and argues that you need to find ways to combine both in order to meet Bible, tradition and culture. Keller also argues out the 'whole service as way of presenting the gospel' (using John Calvin as his discussion 'Gospel Reenactment'). Has orders of service and good suggestions. He has raises the issue of church for believers or non-believers and seekers.

### 5.2 Thinking about Church services in theory.

- **D. A Carson (ed.), *Worship By the Book*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002):** Two chapters make this book really worth it. Chapter 1 is by Carson and is a definition of the word 'worship'. He has a place for 'corporate worship' which is a unique time in a Christian person's week.
- **B. Chapell, *Christ-Centred Worship*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009):** Part 1 goes through the history and thinking behind each aspect of a church service
- **D. A . Carson (ed.), *Worship: Adoration and Action*, (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002):** Have you ever understood your churches approach to services? This book has lots of chapters looking at how different denominations have done church and why they did that. Great if you want to go deeper into WWDx2.
- **K. Mathison, *Given for You: Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, (USA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002):** An epic outline of John Calvin's View of the Lord's supper. Heaps of research and history as well as bible. Will get you thinking heaps about: Lord's supper and the Christian life; Can kids have the Lord's supper; and how the Lord supper fits into the church service as a whole.
- **M. Dever and P Alexander, *The Deliberate Church*, (Illinois: Crossway 2005):** Good solid bible summary of church though from a very member-driven baptist church perspective. Opposed to having multiple - site services. Chapter 9 is very interesting because he talks through the different roles their different services have (which every member must attend)
- **D. Ferguson and others, *The Big Idea: Aligning the Ministries of you Church through Creative Collaboration* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007):** I haven't read this book but in prepping for this seminar I interviewed the leadership of Creek Rd Presbyterian in Brisbane. They are a big church

1000+ people each week) with three 'campuses'. Every service for every campus is planned 6 months out. All the services have the *same* big idea for that Sunday. They assign the Big idea to a preacher who does all the research and presents it to the group 2 weeks out. Each campus preacher and leader will then prepare a sermon and service based on all that shared teaching and common big idea. You can still have a 'gospel *form*' of the service this is a way of controlling and systematising *content*

- **T. Keller *Center Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012):** Ch 23 is about how to make the weekly service open to unbelievers without defeating its purpose of worshiping God as Christians. Some great checklists here for the preacher and service leader to review every few months!
- **J. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth* (USA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002):** This book is an introduction to the idea of the regulative principle for worship. This principle says whatever is not biblically commanded (or can be inferred) is forbidden in the church gathering. This book will get you thinking. I didn't like the application of the principle to all of life though. It was a bit weird.