

WORSHIP TRAINING 1- WORSHIP + UNITY:

First of all, I want to welcome all of you to this worship training, especially if this is the first time you've been to something like this. I hope that this will be the first of a *series* of worship trainings where we meet together as a team once every so often-some, I hope, will be like this where we look at a specific aspect of worship or we look in more detail at what God's Word tells us about worship, and then others which are more practical based, for those of you who play instruments-things to look out for, or worship leading.

Importance of training- let's imagine that you decide you are going to run a marathon:

- 1) First you would need to get into **shape**
 - Adopt the right **attitude** (determination, beat apathy and boredom)
 - Cultivate **good habits** (sleeping well, eating a balanced diet, keeping hydrated, exercise-sometimes we might even employ fitness instructor/coach).
- 2) After that, **then we can start the practical training**
 - go on some practice runs before doing the real thing
 - starting with short distances then gradually increasing the distance until you can attempt to run 26 miles.

With worship it's exactly the same –

- 1) First we need to get into **spiritual** shape (set the **foundation**)
 - Adopt the right attitude (Christ-centred, character, glorifying Him)
 - Cultivate good habits (praying, reading God's word, personal worship, intimacy, fruitfulness- with the help of the Holy Spirit)
 Paul calls this 'training in **Godliness**'

1 Tim 4: 7-9:

⁷Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. ⁸For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. ⁹This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance.

- 2) Practical training
 - Singing / using instruments to praise God
 - Leading others in worship (start small then do more- don't be discouraged because you're not playing so much- *step by step* learning and serving)

This preparation part ('getting into shape) applies to other sports too- football, tennis, rugby etc. - only the practical training would look different. Same with serving God and His church- **the spiritual preparation is the same, but the practical training would look different** (e.g. chairperson, leading small groups, bible studies).

So I hope that you see the value of being trained, to learn from one another, gain wisdom from our brothers and sisters who have walked with the Lord for many years, so that wherever you end up in life, whether at BCCC or not, you have that foundation that others can build upon or you can pass on to others.

What is Worship?

So what is worship? Is it simply playing musical instruments? Singing Christian songs? Or is there a more significant meaning?

The word 'worship' in the dictionary is defined as:

'the expression of reverence, adoration... honour' to someone or something'.

So in the context of worshipping God, it means we express a deep respect for Him, and are in awe of Him. We seek to honour him and give Him glory and praise because of:

- Who He is

e.g. Creator (Nehemiah 9:5-6, Colossians 1:16-17, Revelation 14:9)

Father (Romans 8: 14-17, John 1: 10-13, Galatians 4: 6-7)

Saviour/Deliverer (Psalm 40: 1-3, Psalm 96:2, Psalm 56:13, Isaiah 12)

King (1 Tim 1: 15-17, Psalm 47, Psalm 24:10, Revelation 15: 2-4)

And so on- there are over 100 names of God in the Bible, all which reveal different aspects of His character and nature

- Faithful, Loving, Good, Holy, Righteous, Perfect, Just

-What He has done

God sent us His son Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice to pay for our sins on the cross. In accepting Him as Lord and Saviour, we are forgiven and our relationship with Him is restored. **This is the key point.**

-In our everyday life experience of walking with Him, our testimonies- goodness, faithfulness, trials, blessings

Worship therefore doesn't start from our mouths or our hands, but from our **hearts**.

It is **our response** to who God is and what He has done.

All Christians are called to worship- it is our **purpose**

2 Peter 2: 9:

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

We are called to 'declare the praises of Him'. Often we express this through God's gifts of **music and singing**. Why?

- When we look back at the Bible, God's people sing songs of celebration and thanksgiving
- The Psalms (Psalm 100, 150)
- Paul encourages us to sing hymns and spiritual songs to encourage one another (Colossians 3: 16, Ephesians 5:19)
- Musical worship is happening in Heaven with the elders and the angels (Revelation 4-5) and we join in with their song.

There are a couple of things we can take from this:

- Worship is focused on **God**- who He is and what He has done for us
- To join the worship team, it is IMPORTANT you are a CHRISTIAN otherwise this is NOT worship. The singing and playing then becomes merely a performance, and the praise/glory goes to you instead of God. Worship is only worship if it is centred on God.

Worship in a church setting is important- there is something powerful that happens when we gather together as God's people to declare His praises- worship gives us the chance to open our hearts and focus on Him, invite Him to work in us, and prepares our hearts to hear from God. As a worship team and worship leaders, we have this privilege of leading God's people in praise and worship, to lead God's people in exalting high the name of Jesus, **to turn our eyes towards Him**. It is to create space for people to encounter Him and draw close to Him, for God to work amongst His people. We must pursue intimacy with God.

Unity

Worship can be a powerful display of unity. We gather together to praise the name of Jesus and focus on Him as one body despite coming from all sorts of backgrounds, jobs etc.

As a worship team we must be **united in purpose**- to see God exalted and honoured as we worship and lead others in worship- and **anchored in Christ**. We must co-operate with one another, bear with one another and be gracious towards one another, especially with those who have recently started or have had little experience. How can we lead by example if the team is not united?

Jesus himself says in Mark 3: 24-25:

²⁴ ***If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.***

Here at BCCC, we are blessed to be a church that is *multilingual* and enables people of more than one nation to worship together using different languages. We serve a God who is God of the Nations, and what we are getting is a small glimpse of Heaven, where people of every nation, tribe, tongue, culture, generation will be praising God day and night.

Psalms 86: 9:

⁹ ***All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name.***

I guess it can be easy to label ourselves as belonging to a specific group: English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Young, Old- but I believe this is not how God wants us to label ourselves nor is it how He sees us.

Galatians 3: 28:

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

We worship as a one community-as family- sons and daughters of the Most High God. It is important, as we lead worship, **not to put up barriers** that might prevent people in the congregation from worshipping God collectively. We must be sensitive in our leading- in our song choices, in putting teams together.

What does unity look like a **practical sense**? Here are some suggestions/things to consider:

- When forming teams, have at least someone who can sing in each language (this **does not necessarily mean** that the worship leader has to lead in all 3 languages)
- Break down the divide of having 'English group' one week, then 'Mandarin group' next week and mix up the teams- get to know and co-operate, encourage and learn from brothers and sisters from different groups
- Worship leaders- when preparing/praying over your song lists, also pray for your team members. Likewise backing singers/pianists, pray for your worship leaders
- **Communicate!** Make sure everyone knows what they are doing - be prepared to rehearse/practice. Worship leaders, spend some time telling your team the format/plan so that people know the running order (**don't forget the projectionist!**)
- Pick songs that can be sung in English, Cantonese and Mandarin- **check translations are singable/make sense!** (BCCC worship library is a **good resource** to make use of!)
- Lead unfamiliar songs one language at a time (if possible)
- Spend some time in prayer together before you practice/lead- refocus as a team and keep our eyes fixed on Christ
- Co-operate with Chairman/Speaker
- Gather together once in a while to discuss how things are going- positives, negatives, what could be improved, but also spend time worshipping together and praying together

- Backing singers and pianists- **listen** to the worship leader- where there are differences in opinions/disagreements, be quick to discuss and resolve.