

We are called to give the Lord everything we have. Our lives belong to Him, as does our heart. He is worthy of everything we have. As I share what I feel the Lord is showing us regarding worship in this day, my primary concern is in addressing our corporate times of worship, and, later, the worship community itself. May it be said that our whole life is an act of worship unto the Lord our GOD. It doesn't start or stop with our corporate expressions. This is, however, a time when the larger community of Jesus Christ, can potentially come together & see lives changed & the atmosphere of heaven invade the place where we are. I truly believe that a revolution occurs within a persons' heart & soul, when they encounter the Living GOD, both inside, & outside of the church. So then, IS that happening when we gather? That is the question to be asked for our purposes in these next articles. My ultimate goal in documenting, what I've felt the Lord to be saying, is to address four areas of concern for the worship 'revolution' today, in hopes that people will encounter the Living GOD & He will receive the glory due His Name.

Number one: **Worship should be a priority.**

Number two: **Worship should be prophetic.**

Number three: **Worship should be creative**, because we worship the Creator of the Universe.

Number four: **Worship should include relationship** between people rightly related to each other.

Part One: Worship as a Priority

First, let me say that I believe all of the above are related and interconnected. In my opinion, you can't have one without the others. Worship should be a priority, I believe that is Biblical. It should be prophetic. That, I believe, is also Biblical. And the very act of worship itself, implies some level of creativity. Without creativity in worship, it becomes stagnant, & unchanging. If our times of worship are stagnant & unchanging, are we then allowing the Holy Spirit to come & speak prophetically as He sees fit? And without authentic, committed relationship, often the atmosphere for the prophetic and the creative flow of worship is unsafe, if not nonexistent. Everything we do, as Christians, should include honest, loving, accountable relationship. True life flows out of such. After all, the GODhead itself, is a relationship in the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. So, I believe each area is of primary importance to the flow of worship in these days.

Now, on to addressing the idea of worship as being a priority. Let's start with the source of everything we do-- Scripture. Look at I Chronicles. This book of the Old Testament, which generally seems so dry with all the lists & so on, is full of information about the priority of worship in both the tabernacle of David, & later, in the temple. It is here, where we see David appointing worshipers to work full-time. Note I Chronicles chapter 15, verses 16 through 24, which speak of the appointment of singers & musicians. Next see I Chronicles, chapter 16: 4-7, which, again, speak of the appointing of worship leaders. Also, verse 37, which states that King David (a man after GOD's own heart), left Asaph & his relatives before the ark, to 'minister continually, as every day's work required.' Check out verses 41 & 42 of the same chapter. Now look at I Chronicles 23, verse 4. David appointed 4000 Levites to praise the Lord. By the way, note that David made the instruments used for giving praise! Basically, we get that worship was a REALLY important thing to David. So much so, that he made thousands of instruments just for that purpose!!

The Psalms are an excellent example of the importance of worship in the culture of the Hebrew nation. Psalm means song, & here we have 150 of them! And, the warrior king, and sweet psalmist, David, himself, wrote over half of these psalms. You might particularly want to check out Psalm 108: 1-3; Psalm 149, especially verses 3,5,6,and 7; and Psalm 150, as these psalms, or songs, are full of the praises of GOD.

Notice Isaiah 30:31, 32. This is a revelation of the importance of warfare through worship. As is II Chronicles, chapter 20, where the godly King Jehoshaphat, sent out the worshipers before the army. And, while they were "singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes" against the enemies of Judah, & they were routed!!

Also, look at how the godly kings of Judah, reappointed the worshipers for the service of the Lord, after the ungodly kings allowed idolatry to invade the nation. See II Chronicles 29, verses 25 - 36 and chapter 30, verse 21 through chapter 31: 2. These passages relate how King Hezekiah brought about the restoration of the temple worship. Chapter 35 describes Josiah's reign, as another godly king, & how he reestablished the Passover, the priests and Levites to work in the temple, & the singers to their 'stations' (35:15).

Later, after the exiles return to Israel, note how Ezra restores worship to the people in Ezra 2 and 3. And in Nehemiah, 12, notice how significant the worship of the Lord was in dedicating the wall in chapter 12. Nehemiah even records the fact that:

"Judah rejoiced over the priests & Levites who served. For they performed the worship of their GOD, and the service of purification, together with the singers & the gatekeepers in accordance with the command of David & of his son Solomon. For in the days of David & Asaph, in ancient times, there were leaders of the singers, songs of praise & hymns of thanksgiving to GOD..." (vs.44-47).

It's just everywhere, the priority & importance of worship. And, lest you think there isn't much in the New Testament about worship, look up Ephesians 5:19, 20, Colossians 3:16, and I Corinthians 14:26. Of course, we would be totally remiss if we didn't notice exactly what is going on in heaven, day & night, night & day, 365 days a year (as if heaven has any time concept...hmmm...food for thought??). Try reading Revelation chapter 4 and 5. The four living creatures, never cease saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord GOD Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come." In other words, these guys never stop worshipping!!

Then notice chapter 7, verses 9-12. You've got people from every tribe, tongue & nation, all the angels, & the 24 elders, all falling on their faces & worshipping!! There is so much in this book. It's FULL of worship activity!! You get the idea!! The very activity of heaven is WORSHIP!! So, when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, here on earth, as it is in heaven," do we really understand what that means?

See, the thing is, we seem to know worship is important. But how important is it? Why do our "worship" services focus more on the spoken 'message', then on the worship of the Living GOD? That's not to say that a message is not important. It just seems, more often than not, our time of worship is only viewed as the prelude to something "more important". Why is that? Does that even seem Biblical? Or maybe it is something that has just become a 'form' we've gotten stuck in over the centuries. How much of a priority, in reality, is our time of worship? Do we give it the weight that Scripture seems to? What if, as we relinquish our programs, & give ourselves over to radical, passionate, life-changing worship, the Lord comes & moves in our midst? What if people's lives are changed during this time? What if, by our very act of worship, the atmosphere of our city is changed, & people who wouldn't normally, find it easier to think about GOD, & Jesus Christ? (Revolution!) And yes, this is something that should be going on in our lives, both corporately, as well as, individually. How can we NOT make worship a priority in these days? If the Lord truly inhabits the praises of His people, as His word says, wouldn't we want to give Him more to inhabit?!! By the way, since all Christians now have the Holy Spirit living in them, what about the idea that everyone can participate in worship at a whole new level? Check out Gary Goodell's articles on that very subject. www.thirddaychurches.com

I know those are a lot of questions to answer. But we must be willing to ask the hard questions, if we want to see people's lives radically changed for the glory of GOD. I don't know about you, but we can't settle for anything less... ..revolution.....

Thanks for being interested. I can't think of anything more important than giving the Lord of Hosts EVERYTHING He is worthy of. Can you??

Part two: Worship and the Prophetic

In part 1 of the 'Worship Revolution', we discussed worship as a priority. This article will focus on worship and the prophetic.

What is Prophetic Worship?

That is the question! King David seemed to know, because the record of his life records that he set apart for service, "...some of the sons of Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals..." (I Chronicles. 25:1). Note that the verse says they PROPHESED, according to the kings' commandment. Verses 2, 3 and 5 of the same chapter, also speak of the worship leaders being prophetic, and seem to indicate that instruments were to prophesy, and that worship itself would be prophetic. These worship leaders were assumed to be prophetic in their duties. Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary defines prophecy as, "the inspired declaration of divine will and purpose". To prophesy means, "to utter, by divine inspiration" (also Webster's Ninth). It was supposed, that these worship leaders would be declaring and speaking forth, what the Lord was inspiring them to say.

The tendency in most church worship services, has been to pick a song list, and stick to that list all the way through, with no change, no shift, no lingering. Even if the Holy Spirit comes and we sense that He is really doing something in our midst, we must move on and stay with the program... after all, time is of the essence, isn't it? Well, the truth is, the Lord is not in a hurry. Shouldn't we desire to linger in His presence, especially if He is doing some work during our time of worship? This is what I would consider the prophetic flow. It is allowing the Lord to lead us, as HE sees fit, rather than sticking to our programs come "hell or high water."

Here is an Example

What if we plan on doing a set list that focuses on warfare. But, after we start, we see that there is a greater need for intimacy in the room. What do we do? Do we stick to our program and muscle through the songs, losing sight of the fact that the Lord is really doing something else that day? Or do we possibly decide, in the moment, to throw out those last 3 songs, and spontaneously put in a song of intimacy that leads to a powerful, and transforming work within peoples' hearts. THAT'S A PROPHETIC ACT!!!! It's following the leading of the Lord, for that moment, and acting in to what is on HIS heart right then, for the people!!

Perhaps we've decided to focus on the love and personal connection between individuals and Jesus. What if, as we start that day, the Lord wants us to be in intercessory mode, and desires us to pray for a breakthrough in our community (note that worship and intercession are linked in Revelation 5:8, and 8:3& 4)? Do we stubbornly choose to stick to our agenda and miss what the Lord has for the city?

Trusting the Lord

Are you terrified yet? Are you wondering if mass chaos and pandemonium will break out if we relinquish that kind of control? And by the way, how do we even KNOW if that's what the Lord wants? I think a lot of this has to do with trusting the Lord and His guidance. If we ask Him for bread, will He give us a stone? No way--He is good Father!!! The Best!! He will not leave us or forsake us. If we are asking Him to come into our worship services, and our hearts are willing to let that happen, He WILL come, because He desires to be with us.

The other safeguard is that the Lord is in every believer (Eph. 4:4-6). That being the case, we also are reminded of I Cor. 14: 26, Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16, which all basically assume that each gathering of believers will include a contribution from each person (by the way, the size of the gathering isn't mentioned ...could be large or small). This includes the area of worship with, "songs, hymns, spiritual songs". So, everyone contributes. And, if we have one Spirit, He is going to lead each one to contribute what is on His heart for the day. As we worship together, He will lead each one. And, at the end of the day, hopefully, we will have experienced what was on HIS heart for the time allotted. Of course, all of this is risky, and requires leaders who are willing to take those risks. But, if we truly want to see the LORD take back His church, and guide US on the way, we have got to be willing to take some risks as we gather together. Yes, people will make mistakes, because we are human, and fallible. But I would rather be known for trying to hear the voice of the Lord, and missing it sometimes, than simply shutting out His voice altogether.

I think, at the root of most of our programs, is that we simply don't know how to do it any other way. We think we are serving people by setting such a strict agenda and sticking to it. At some level, maybe we ARE serving the PEOPLE. But are we serving the LORD? It takes a major adjustment to reconsider doing worship in a more free and prophetic style. But the rewards are sooo worthwhile, because we start to experience GOD's heart and desire, rather than always focusing on our own. Remember, worship is for GOD, not for us. And that is probably the most important part in all of this!

It's Biblical

If, in the Bible, Scripture equates worship and worship leaders with being prophetic, shouldn't we also? The prophets would speak forth what the Lord was telling them. Remember Isaiah, Ezekiel, Moses, Stephen, Hulda, Deborah, and the daughters of Philip? They spoke what the Lord said. And the worship leaders were known to be prophetic. They would have spoken/sung/played what the Lord was saying. David was known as the 'sweet psalmist of Israel' (II Sam. 23:1). He wrote over half of the songs known as the book of Psalms. Many, many of those Psalms are prophetic, and point to the coming of the Messiah. Note Psalm 2, 16, 22, 69, 110, among others.

Less well known are the psalms/songs written by some of the temple worship leaders. Among these, you will find Asaph, Heman, Ethan (Jeduthun), and the sons of Korah, who were an organization of singers and songwriters. Check out Psalms 73 through 89. If you read these works, you might notice the interactive and intercessory nature of these Psalms. There is a prophetic cry for the Lord to have mercy on the nation of Israel. We see the responsive voice of the Lord in Psalms 50, (written by Asaph), 75, 81. These songs have a tone similar to that of the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. There is even a cry for revival in Psalm 85! Among the minor prophets, Habakkuk, was possibly a Levite who performed the service of worship in the temple. Chapters 1, verse 1, and 3, verse 19, seem to indicate both a prophetic and a worship role for him. It seems pretty plain that worship was known and expected to be a prophetic act within the nation of Israel.

Even Jesus was a prophet (Prophet, Priest & King). Aren't we to be like Jesus? Oh, most definitely!!! How did we get so far away from prophetic worship in our Christianity today? That is probably a topic for another conversation. But for the purposes of our discussion here, and with the Bible being our standard, it seems clear and Biblical that we should be prophetic when we gather to worship. This means giving the Holy Spirit access to our hearts, and then to our services, letting Him direct us, even if it means we never do one single song that we picked. Hey, it just means you've got to get a bigger repertoire of songs! Or, learn how to interact as a band with prophetic sounds that come in the moment. It also means helping the congregation learn how they can contribute, because our skills in sharing in the church service have become pretty dormant, I'd guess. Imagine the pastor, or other leader, holding a mic in the congregation, and if someone has Scripture the Lord has given them for the moment, he or she comes forward to share it. In response, the worship leader and worship team, might move into a song that perfectly fits that theme! OR, they move into singing a phrase or verse of the Scripture, so that the whole congregation can sing with them!! OR, they model the sound of the Scripture, or prayer. For example: drums symbolize the authority of the Lord, so if the Scripture or prayer speak of GOD's authority, the drums play more freely & authoritatively. Keyboards/piano often reveal the sense of the grace of GOD flowing upon us. Violins might bring forth the cry of the heart, be it the Lords' or ours. Flutes might bring a sense of child likeness and light. Now you've just moved into GOD's prophetic call for that moment!!! How exciting! In addition, you've just allowed your congregation to contribute to the whole flow, and to GOD's heart for the day also.

Does this mean no one has any direction or plan for the day? No. Hopefully, what we plan is of the Lord. We can plan, praying that the Lord is in it. But we just need to be more open to the move of the Lord in the moment. In other words, give our services back to Him, because they belong to Him anyway, right?!!

Be encouraged. It's time!!

Part three: Worship and the Arts

Let's start by answering this question: "Who is the ultimate Creator?"
And now, "Who is created in His image?"

It is in an effort to be reminded that GOD, Yahweh, is the/our ultimate Creator, that these questions come. He has created all things, and all things are created by Him (Col 1:16). We also know that we are created in His image (Gen. 1:27). Does it stand to reason then, that creativity should flow from GOD's creation? Shouldn't we be creative as Jesus is creative? I believe the answer is yes.

Unfortunately, the church has become quite stagnant over the centuries, in allowing anything truly creative to come forth through her people. We have chased wonderful artists off, sending them out into the darkness instead of embracing them. Anyone heard of Vincent Van Gogh? Incredibly artistic, but also artistic in his eccentricities, he was working as a lay minister among miners in Belgium. Leaders in the church, upon visiting the work in the mining camp, decided Van Gogh was behaving in an undignified manner as a minister, by identifying himself so closely with the miners, and fired him. Van Gogh turned to art, but died by committing suicide, and never fully recovering from the former rejection (ref at end). Imagine if he had been able to embrace the artistic gifting within, and was able to be supported and encouraged in his gifting. There are countless other stories. You may know of some yourself. Still, the Lord gets HIS glory, and the works done by these artists reflect Him. How much more, if the church had embraced the arts, instead of trying to lock them up.

When I first got saved, I put away my theatre and artistic interests, believing them to be somehow demonic. Though often the arts are full of demonized activity, it does not have to be that way. I believe this occurs because often the church, rather than embracing and stewarding the arts, and artists, pushes them away as unholy. When rejected, the artist will find a way and place to create. But will it be for GOD, or for man? Artists need to be encouraged and disciplined toward maturity. Not thrown to the 'wolves' so to speak, of having to rely solely on the secular industry to guide them.

Eventually, the Lord freed me from my belief, and showed me that the arts are for HIS glory, and need to be ransomed back from the one who has kidnapped them (the enemy). As a believer, I can tell you of numerous times when I have witnessed a beautiful painting, or other work of art, listened to an incredible piece of music, or read a poem, when I was overwhelmed by the incredible presence of the Holy Spirit involved. I have often been brought closer to the Lord through such. As an unbeliever, I remember being deeply touched by a particular painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City. Had there been a person there to talk to me about Jesus as I pondered that beautiful painting, my heart would have been softened to the point of really listening to them tell me about the Ultimate Creator. I am saddened by how we have removed the arts, and sterilized our services and lives with Jesus, to the point where there is NO creativity, and only carbon copies of either what the world is producing, or what the 'hot' church is producing.

If you look around at creation, you obviously can see the most amazingly creative things which the Lord brought forth. Have you ever really pondered the creativity of a zebra? Think about a giraffe. And look at a polar bear, or watch a horse run. Imagine the feeling you get in the springtime, when everything is coming to life. How do you feel after the first snowfall when the landscape is completely transformed by the color white? Are you amazed and moved by the ocean and it's roaring waves, or the incredible color and beauty of a mountain side in the autumn?

Ever noticed how a piece of music immediately propels you back to some distant memory, and you are in that place again, with all the feelings and emotions? Are you uplifted by a song? In the same way, we are often profoundly influenced by a ballet or orchestra, or a play. Ever felt a life changing experience by going to see a particular movie? These things come from those created in the image of GOD. "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights...." (James 1: 17). He uses everything for His glory, even a donkey (II Peter 2:16), or a pagan king (Daniel 3 and 4)). He called the creation 'good'. He called the creation of man and woman, 'very good'. Let creativity flow LORD!!!

I am an advocate for the artist. I am an advocate for allowing the arts and creativity back into our lives, and back into our churches. Wouldn't it be revolutionary to have the local artist in a congregation, place his or her

paintings or other works in the church halls, or display cases? What about a room dedicated to the works of the artists in the church? What about letting artist's paint during worship? Or read a poem during a service? Or do a moving piece of theatre? What about taking it out into the highways and byways, and letting people know Who the REAL Creator IS?????!!!!!!! Imagine if we supported artists the way we support evangelists or missionaries. Guess what, they might be the same thing!!!

Hey you artist: get your stuff into a coffee shop or other gallery. Take the chance....go for it!!!! Hey you musicians, who says you can't go into a coffee shop or club and do worship music, or music the Lord has given you? Do we want to reach people or not? It might be the artist who finds real success in reaching people today, by doing so in a totally unique and relevant way. Let's face it, most people are not going to walk into a church building on their own. But we can take it to them. Where most folks will turn and walk away if someone tries to preach at them, they will stand and stare at a wonderful work of art. They will linger and listen to a worship band on a street corner, lost in praises to the King. They will join in the celebration as dancers celebrate Who their GOD is!! I've seen it happen. I've seen the Lord being supremely worshiped through art, dance, music, theatre, film. It happens. It should be happening more.

Art touches a person's soul. It has touched mine. I'm sure it has touched yours also. It goes to a place a speech often cannot. (And let's face it, most sermons are speeches). The arts go beyond the barriers, beyond the walls, beyond the fears. The Holy Spirit pierces the heart of the person who is affected by a song, work, dance, story, poem. Suddenly, we feel like we might know Who GOD is for a second. We feel we may have connected with the Creator. We are suddenly moved to know HIM at a level deeper than we could ever have known. Who is this GOD Who has created such beauty? Who is this GOD Who understands the pain deep in my soul? And Who is His Son?!!!!!!! This is the heart of the Lord.....to pierce the darkness.

Can we afford to let the arts into our circles? Can we afford NOT to? It's time to open up the doors, and welcome the writers, artists, musicians, and dancers, and allow them to speak the words of the Lord thru their medium. Let the artist come forth and prophesy. After all, King David did it on his harp, and he was a man after GOD's own heart. Isn't that our goal?

Here are some Scriptures that reveal how the arts were used in both the Old Testament and the New:

- Ps. 45:1 "my heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer"
- Ezekiel 4 and 5: Ezekiel 'acted out' a demonstration of what the Lord was going to do.
- I Chronicles 25: Musicians assigned to 24 hour worship in the temple, were to prophesy on their instruments.
- Matthew, Mark, Luke, John: Note that Jesus, Himself, used the art of storytelling, through the parables He told in the Gospels.
- Exodus 31:1-11: Here, the Lord explains to Moses regarding those whom He, Himself had appointed and gifted in "artistic designs", and "all kinds of craftsmanship".
- I Kings 7:14 and following: Hiram from Tyre, was hired by Solomon to work on the Temple, because he was "filled with wisdom, understanding and skill for doing any work in bronze".
- II Sam. 6:14: "and David was dancing before the Lord with all his might..."
- Acts 17:28: Paul uses a known poets words, in speaking to the Athenians on Mars Hill in Greece about the One True GOD.
- Col. 3:16: "...teaching and admonishing each other with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to GOD."
- Song of Solomon 2:4: He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love."
ALSO, 6:4: "...You are as.....awesome as an army with banners."

There are others, such as the care taken in the artistic endeavors of building the temple, or the material used in the holy place, or the priests garments. You may find more yourself. In closing, I leave you with Psalm 150,

which tells everything to praise the Lord, and specifically describes both dance, and music, as being for His praises:

Praise the Lord! Praise GOD in His sanctuary; Praise HIm in His mighty expanse. Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre; Praise HIm with timbrel and dancing; Praise HIm with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the LORD!

(The Van Gogh story is taken from an awesome issue of Last Days Magazine, Vol. 18, Number 1, "What is the Church doing with the Powerful Gift of Art".)

Our next article will discuss the relationship between prophetic worship, and community, and how the two are mutually dependent upon one another, both within a worship team, and within the gathering of peoples known as the 'congregation'.

Part four: Worship and community

Worship is a very intimate act. If you have ever felt awkward in church, standing there, with nothing in your hands, singing a song & desperately wanting to put your hands in the air, but feeling too weird to do so, you will know what I mean. You want to be intimate with the Lord, but the distinct feeling of scores of people around you make it hard. But what if you were in a room with people you feel close to? Does this make it any easier? If you felt safe around the people you are worshipping with, it might. I know it is for me. This 'safe' feeling, is one that only comes with a sense of community. Community, by the very nature of the word, implies a couple of things: commune (as in communing together, or 'coming together'), and unity (being in union with one another).

Trust. This is another key word. How many of us trust those around us not to, oh, let's say, make fun of us when we do something stupid, or try something that makes us vulnerable like praying out loud, or maybe prophesying. Ever felt a little afraid to give someone a word of knowledge, or an impression you feel is from the Lord? These are all risk taking behaviors. And to take a risk, you often have to feel safe with those around you.

For the purposes of this article, when we talk about worship and community, we are talking about the risks involved in prophetic worship, prophetic singing, prophetic instrument playing & any act of contributing INTO the act of worship (prayer, scripture reading, prophetic direction, etc). When a team is working together to create the act of worship, there has to be a level of trust involved. Each team member has to trust the others to know the music, play it correctly, sing it well, etc. The congregation trusts the team to lead them in the time of worship. They also have to trust the pastor to guide any sort of prophetic revelation that might come. Lots of trusting to do, right? But how is this accomplished?

Our worship team, made a concerted effort to do one simple thing: spend time together. In any relationship, if you don't actually just spend time together, the relationship falters & eventually fails. The same is true of a team that needs to rely on one another for a deeper level of worship. Our team spent time before every practice session, just either talking, sharing or praying for one another. Sometimes, this was a guided effort, with specific questions for each one of us to listen to and answer. Sometimes, it was a loose effort, where

anyone could share anything. We almost always tried to pray for one another in some capacity. And I would try to spend 'coffee' time with various members of the team just to hang out and learn about one another. If you know your keyboard player is afraid of heights, doesn't it help you to see beyond his or her faults & love him/her more? If you sit down and watch a movie with your rhythm section from time to time, you see how they interact with their families, and it can give you greater grace for the moments when they 'blow it'. If you hear about the marital struggles of someone on your team, and everyone gathers around that person, stands with them in prayer & loves them thru it, wouldn't your value on their prophetic word about marriage grow exponentially?

The main thing is: SPEND TIME TOGETHER AS A TEAM. And this goes not just for the worship team, but ANY other team working to further the Kingdom of GOD. And spend time together OUTSIDE of the task at hand! You wouldn't spend time with your spouse just talking about marriage, would you? That would be boring at best, & damaging at worst. Get to know one another... Eat a meal together. Laugh together. The next time you are playing and hearing the Holy Spirit move, I guarantee it will be stronger & more powerful than before.

By the way, developing community is something the early church was pretty good at. The twelve disciples spent 3 years living, eating, drinking, traveling & ministering with Jesus. The early church was gathered together in one place at the beginning of Acts, seeking the Lord together about who should replace Judas. They were in one accord & had things in common, which they shared with one another as the need arose (Acts 1 & 2). They understood how much they needed each other. They did not just show up at church on Sunday, do their duty, or get something for themselves & then go home, only to spend an entire week without speaking to a single brother or sister in the Lord. We need each other. We need encouragement. We need prayer. We need words of hope, or a push closer to the Lord, and yes, even correction sometimes. This stuff should come from the Body, not just from the pastor. He/She cannot do everything. They were not meant to. We were meant to be a Body. We all have gifts & we all should be operating in them (I Cor. 12-14). It's Biblical. One part helps another. This is true community. It's what we are supposed to live life like.

Community is important. Programs aren't. Church should be a community, NOT a program. So go ahead: live life like.....a commitment. Live life like...a community. Live life like...a family. Live life like you were meant to do. **Follow Jesus!**

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