

PLAYING TOGETHER

To be an effective worship team, it is important to understand each instrument's contribution to the group and how the individual parts fit together. Key elements to your worship songs like rhythm, melody and dynamics will be affected by the instrumentation you use.

When you have a clear plan for your song, it is easier to communicate the instrumentation you need to achieve this plan. Not every instrument needs to play all of the time. It is a matter of understanding the instrumentation available, abilities, and the needs of your congregation.

Musical contrast, like the rise and fall of dynamics, should be worked out in rehearsal so everyone makes those changes together. If dynamics should change during a live worship time, allow the leader to direct those changes. If a response time that has been rehearsed goes longer than expected, you may drop some instruments out to lower dynamics or have the melody played instrumentally, rather than sung, to allow people to respond. You will need to communicate this clearly to your team.

Common rhythms used by the rhythm section (mainly drums and bass guitar) lock the song together and give it a common style or groove. Finding a groove for the song to sit in is important as it establishes direction. When your whole group grabs a certain rhythm together, it can be a very effective musical technique.

Listen to the balance of your group. Ideally, you would include a sound technician in your ensemble who knows the group and can balance what the congregation hears. If you don't have someone to listen to you as you rehearse, record your practice times and listen to the balance. When you are playing or singing, you should be able to hear every other member of the group in a ratio that is appropriate to the song and overall sound. When one instrument is overpowering the others, it is a sign that you need to change the volume of certain instruments.

People worship through the lyrics of a song. Use the balance of the singers as a good reference point for the overall volume of the group. Once this is established, the volume of the other instruments can be set appropriately. Remember, you should be able to hear your congregation singing. If you can't, then you need to adjust the overall volume accordingly.

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