

Questions To Ask At Rehearsal

I love questions. My friend Adam Saenz taught me to be a connoisseur of questions. Questions are so important because they tell us where to look, what to focus on. They shape our future.

I recently have been asking teams that I lead the following questions at rehearsal:

Who will be there on Sunday? Why are we doing this? What are we actually doing?

I'll explain why these questions are important and teach you a few questions that will help your teams make better music.

Who will be there on Sunday?

Talk about who is actually going to be there. Brent that just lost his job. Melissa and Joe that just got married. Sam who's having a rough time in 10th grade. Amanda that just got dumped. Again. Eric, whose business is just booming. Edward and Mitzy that are afraid they're going to lose their unborn child. Frederic, who is just a happy-go-lucky college student. You know, people with real lives.

It's important to ask this because you are going to create a space where those specific individuals can meet with God. Not the crowd of Australians or Texans who were in the congregation when the latest CD was recorded. Your congregation. Shape the experience to fit them.

Oh, and Jesus too. He'll be in the room. Don't sing to Him like he's far off. He is Emmanuel, God with us. Sweet.

Why are we doing this?

Serving well requires sacrifice. There are fifty-two Sundays every year. That's five-hundred-twenty of them each decade. Each person who is serving has a different life with different circumstances, stresses, hopes, and days. We need to *rehearse our purpose almost every time we gather*. Otherwise, we just forget. Our purpose should be a celebration, it should inspire us, it should breathe life back into us. Remember the opposite of "without a vision, the people perish"? With a vision, the people thrive!

What are we actually doing?

Playing the notes on the page? Making the chord changes at the same time? Beginning and ending at the same time? As musical servants, we're on this moving target of excellence. What was great last year should only be good this year. We need to keep managing our talents for increase, rather than burying them.

Artistry

That brings me to a final set of questions. You know that question that gets asked after you do a song at rehearsal: "Any questions? Is everybody alright with that?" What does that really do? I think it sets a pretty low bar, musically. If you just switched that question to "Is there anything that we could do to that song to make it more musical, dynamic, emotional, artistic, or just better?" That's a whole different direction.

Here are a number of questions that I ask teams as they evaluate how the musical part of gathered worship went:

- ~ Where was the band in the scale of "making it through the music" to "actually making music?"
- ~ Did we say musically what we sang lyrically?
- ~ Did the music breathe? Did it have space or did all the band play on mostly every part of every song?
- ~ Was it alive? Did it have wide dynamics or did it never get really, really quiet or really, really loud?
- ~ Was each part important? Was it produced well or did the band just routinely play through the chords?
- ~ Did the music get the groove right? Did it strongly support singing? Did it cause our bodies to move?
- ~ Would the music have stood on its own, outside of a church service? Was it *that* beautiful and moving?
- ~ Did each player use their instrument as their worshiping voice, a very personal, emotional expression offered in the creation of a space for a community to worship?
- ~ Did the music itself give words to our hearts, expressing the inexpressible?
- ~ Was the music so "center stage" and constantly full that it tragically made us feel like we weren't even needed to sing?

What questions do you ask your team?

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