

How do we reach the place of breakthrough? (1) Praise & the Prophetic

When leading worship, we are looking to take people to a place of breakthrough where their focus is lifted from life's many distractions and pressures and on to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12:2) There are so many voices that surround us in this world, seeking to be the loudest influence in our lives, but our responsibility as worship leaders is to bring people **in** to the hill of the Lord (Psalm 24:3) to receive from His cleansing stream and to hear His voice.

(We need to take care not to be one of the distractions, which is why we don't put little sermons between songs, and we need to ensure that our song choices reflect the heart of God for our congregations too).

The challenge for us is 'how do we reach the place of breakthrough' where people can hear the voice of God for themselves within the context of a corporate setting. An effective approach is **praise**. When we bring the high praises there is often a release of the prophetic that flows out and it's as though our singing/shouting/dancing and rejoicing blows like a strong wind that pushes the cloud away to let the sun break through with all its light, life and warmth.

Psalm 95 gives us a wonderful pattern of praise and the prophetic. The writer begins with a declaration of singing, shouting and thanksgiving that appears to be full of energy and passion.

(It's important to note the nature of this worship. The church must not lose the element of joy and praise from its worshipping life as it is such a vital component. Too much attention to style and the desire to follow secular trends in music can lead to a very one sided expression to our celebration of Jesus and so limit the work of the Holy Spirit. We must be free to explore a variety of rhythms and styles to provide a platform for praise).

These declarations of praise continue until the end of verse 7 when the writer switches to a more prophetic tone with 'Today, if you would hear His voice', and the remainder of the Psalm continues in the same vein with a timely word from the Lord.

I have found that praise and celebration can often flow into a release of the prophetic. After we have danced and praised our Lord in song there is often breakthrough to hear His voice. These can be the most precious moments where we hear the whispers of the Holy Spirit for our lives and situations. From this place of surrender the Holy Spirit can lead us in a variety of ways and it's our responsibility as worship leaders to sense what the Lord is doing and follow Him. I have found that often ministry or intercession can flow out of these times.

Let's not grow tired or weary of bringing the church into the courts of the Lord, with dancing and celebration where we can come with confidence (Hebrews 10:19) to listen to a faithful God.

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