



Late for God

By Tony Guerrero



Worship teams are all unique. But there are also little quirks that seem to be common ground for just about any worship team out there. I bet if we did an experiment, we'd get fairly consistent results no matter where we were located across the country. Here it is: We should all send an e-mail to our singers and musicians. Tell them that at the next rehearsal, a special guest would be there—lead them to believe that it was going to be somebody big, like Billy Graham or Bono. We could tell them the seats would be limited and not everyone would get in to meet the special guest. I'd be willing to say that nearly all of our teams would arrive to rehearsal early that night. The seats would fill long before the guest was even scheduled to appear.

Contrary to popular belief, musicians can be on time. They simply need the right motivation. Nearly every week we sing songs about God's presence, but, frankly, we often act like we don't believe it. If we truly believe God, the Maker of the universe, was going to be in the room with us, why do so many of us show up late? As leaders, it is up to us to teach our teams about the consistency between what we sing and how we act.

I'd like to share some of my ideas about why we need to watch our responsibilities with our time. And while lateness can seem like such a small thing, it goes much deeper than the surface. It is a matter of respect, and in the end it's about love, for the people around us. And that is no small matter; it's of the utmost importance. Please use this as a guide to help you teach your team about the loving act of punctuality.

Being late is a product of:

Pride

Being late (without a true emergency) basically says to everyone else, "Your time is not as important as mine." Or, "I don't need to rehearse as much as you do." Both are issues of pride. I doubt anyone reading this needs to be reminded of how God feels about pride, but perhaps if this article is making you uncomfortable, you do need a reminder. God despises pride, and it is often the primary cause of habitual lateness.

Selfishness

Being late is a display of our tendency to want to be served, rather than be a servant. "I'll come once you guys are finished setting up for me." "It doesn't matter if you guys need me here, I'll come when I want to."

Laziness

Being late is a symptom of not putting forth the appropriate effort that should be afforded to any act of ministry.

Disorder

When others are relying on you and you constantly miss the needed arrival time, you are jeopardizing the order that is often necessary for a church service to be effective.

Hypocrisy

To be up on a platform projecting the image of a Christian life, but ignoring the very serious contradictions above is, simply, hypocritical.

Disrespect

How we treat others is important to God. When everyone else is on time and you are constantly showing up late, you are gravely disrespecting everyone on your team—the volunteers, the leaders, even others who show up late. Worse yet, it dishonors God. In Matthew 25:40, we read, "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Jesus is not just talking about offering a drink of water—He is referring to how we treat each other. When you treat His children with disrespect, you are disrespecting Him.

Finally, this might seem harsh, but it needs to be said: If you are a leader who is habitually late, you are not a leader. You might have been appointed as such, but I challenge you to find a single book on leadership that promotes lateness as a virtue, or reconcile your actions with true biblical leadership. As the leader, you should be the first one there. You have no right to expect anything from your team that you are not modeling.

I want to challenge us all. Let us erase the sin of pride that is causing our tardiness. The true leader will humble him or herself and arrive early. This allows them to act as the servant towards the others as they arrive. Show your team and leaders how much you respect them and value their time. And, even more importantly, start showing up with the expectation that you are truly going to be standing in God's presence when you get there. Would you really be late for that? I doubt any of us would want to miss a moment of time with our Lord.

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