



Project #9

EVALUATE YOUR CHURCH'S CONGREGATIONAL PREPARATION PRACTICES

OBJECTIVE: To analyze current church practices for congregational preparation for worship, identify areas for enhancement based on best practices, and propose and implement improvements to foster deeper engagement in corporate worship.

Read pages 206-211 in *The Worship Ministry Guidebook*.

Background: The book emphasizes that if congregations arrive prepared for corporate worship each week, the times of gathered worship will be significantly more meaningful. Personal worship, or private times of daily worship, is highlighted as a prerequisite for corporate worship. The goal is to provide tools and encouragement for the congregation to engage in personal worship throughout the week and become familiar with the upcoming congregational songs and sermon message.

Instructions:

Phase 1: Assessment of Current Congregational Preparation Practices

Research Current Methods (Observation & Interview):

- » **Document existing channels:** Identify all ways your church currently attempts to prepare the congregation for weekly worship. This might include:
 - Church website pages
 - Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, X)
 - Weekly emails or newsletters
 - Printed bulletins or handouts
 - Announcements (verbal or on-screen) promoting preparation resources
 - Any dedicated worship prep or congregational worship website or webpage
- » **Interview key leaders:** Speak with your worship leader, pastor, and communications team members to understand their intentional efforts, perceived challenges, and goals for congregational preparation.

Analyze Content and Accessibility:

- » For each identified channel, document the **type of content** provided that aids congregational preparation. Look for elements such as:
 - Sermon Scripture passages, brief synopses, and questions to help the congregant interact with the sermon material
 - Specific prayer points for the worship service and leaders (distinct from a general prayer list)
 - Links to congregational songs (especially lesser-known ones) via YouTube, Amazon, iTunes, or Spotify playlists
 - Brief devotionals related to song texts
 - Follow-up questions/commentary from the previous week's sermon
 - Family worship cues or material for home worship

Evaluate accessibility:

- » How easy is it for the average church member to find and utilize these resources?
- » Are they mobile-friendly?
- » Is the information too complex, making engagement difficult?

Phase 2: Gap Identification and Improvement Opportunities**Compare to Best Practices:**

- » **Identify gaps:** Which elements from the recommended practices in the book (p. 210) are your church not currently implementing, or doing only minimally, that could be of assistance?
- » **Identify areas for enhancement:** Where could existing efforts be expanded or made more effective? For example, if songs are listed, could YouTube links with lyrics be added? Could additional resources be added to assist people in preparing their hearts for the sermon? Can we do more to assist families in worship at their homes?

Brainstorm & Prioritize Improvements:

- » Based on your gap analysis, **brainstorm specific, actionable improvements** that would move your church closer to “Engaging Your Congregation in Transformational Worship.”
- » **Prioritize improvements** that are feasible for you to implement and oversee for a period. Consider your church’s unique needs and context.
- » Focus on how the proposed improvements will help people prepare for worship, connect with lyrics, and aid in personal worship during the week, making their corporate worship an overflow of their personal times of preparation.

Phase 3: Proposal and Implementation Plan**Develop a Detailed Improvement Proposal:**

- » Select **1-3 key improvements** that you and your church team can realistically implement and oversee for a period (e.g., 4-6 weeks).
- » For each proposed improvement, detail:
 - **Description:** What exactly will be created or changed? (e.g., “Create a weekly ‘Worship Prep Spotlight’ section on the church website homepage”).
 - **Content:** Specify what kind of content will be included (e.g., “This section will include the sermon Scripture and a brief synopsis, prayer points for the service and leaders, and YouTube links to all congregational songs, prioritizing new or lesser-known ones.”).
 - **Distribution Strategy:** How will this content be disseminated? (e.g., “The website link will be shared via weekly email and a dedicated Facebook post on Tuesdays.”).
 - **Rationale:** Explain why this improvement is significant and how it aligns with the books’ principles (e.g., “This provides a centralized online content hub, making it easier for members to engage with preparation materials throughout the week, fostering personal worship as a prerequisite for corporate worship and aiding their familiarity with songs.”).
 - **Roles & Responsibilities:** Outline who will do what (e.g., Who will draft sermon synopses? Who will find song links and devotionals? Who will manage website updates and social media posts?).
 - **Timeline:** A realistic schedule for creating, distributing, and maintaining the new elements.

Oversight and Feedback Mechanism:

- » Describe how you will oversee the implementation for the agreed-upon period.
- » Suggest methods for gathering feedback from the congregation (e.g., a simple survey, feedback from small group leaders, anecdotal observations) to assess the impact of your improvements. The goal is to see if these efforts lead to a congregation that is more engaged in personal worship, which in turn prepares them for gathered worship.

Phase 4: Reflection and Presentation

Final Reflection:

- » After the implementation period, evaluate the success of your proposed improvements.
- » What impact did these changes have on congregational engagement in worship?
- » What challenges did you encounter, and how did you address them?
- » What did you learn about the importance of preparing the congregation for worship, and how does this connect to the overall goal of “engaging your congregation in transformational worship”?

Presentation:

- » Present your findings, proposal, and outcomes.
- » Share examples of the content you created and the channels you utilized.
- » Discuss the impact, lessons learned, and any recommendations for continued improvement.