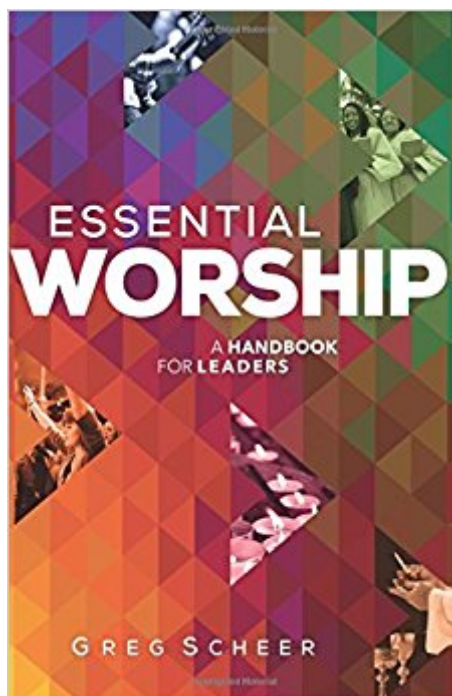


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# Essential Worship: A Handbook For Leaders



## Synopsis

An Essential Guide to Understanding and Leading WorshipWorship leaders are adrift in a sea of worship resources, but, incredibly, no single book provides a simple introduction to worship and worship leading. Essential Worship is a concise, easy-to-read primer on the basics of worship theology and practice. Each concept is introduced clearly and concisely. Diagrams, charts, and bulleted lists make the information easy to digest. And preparation and reflection questions help readers apply the material to their own church context. Whether one is a beginner or an experienced worship leader, readers from all traditions will find in this resource a solid foundation for future success. It is particularly well-suited for the first-time worship or praise band leader, as well as for pastors who want to be more intentional about the music in their services.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Baker Books (November 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080100828X

ISBN-13: 978-0801008283

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #90,588 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #55 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Institutions & Organizations #59 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Rites & Ceremonies #248 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Pastoral Resources

## Customer Reviews

A clear and concise introduction to worship and worship leadingEssential Worship is an easy-to-read primer on the basics of worship theology and practice that is perfect for pastors and worship leaders of all levels of experience. Each concept is introduced and unpacked with useful diagrams, charts, and lists, plus preparation and reflection questions to help you apply the material to your unique church context. Whether you're beginning a new service or hoping to deepen existing worship, this indispensable resource is your solid foundation for future success."Greg Scheer offers personal and fresh perspective on the interworkings of corporate worship with his unique blend of levity and insight. This book is a good springboard for conversation and growth for

both worship leaders and congregations."--Sandra McCracken, singer-songwriter" This is the book we've been waiting for! It is a comprehensive introduction to the theology and practice of worship, combining historical and biblical perspectives with a practitioner's pastoral experience. An essential resource for anyone looking to grow in their understanding of corporate worship."--Glenn Packiam, pastor, New Life Downtown; author, *Mystery of Faith*" Greg Scheer is "a theologically and pastorally sensitive" reflective practitioner--an ideal teacher for a new generation of worship leaders."--John Witvliet, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary" I usually find introductions to worship and worship leading disappointing because they are either theologically, historically, liturgically, or practically weak. There is always some gap. For the first time, I've found something that briefly yet thoroughly covers it all!"--Zac Hicks, Canon for Worship and Liturgy, Cathedral Church of the Advent; author, *The Worship Pastor* Greg Scheer is a composer, author, musician, and minister of worship. Currently minister of worship at Church of the Servant (CRC) and a music associate with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, both in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he is the author of *The Art of Worship* and a contributor to *The Hymn*, *Call to Worship*, *Worship Leader*, and *New Songs of Celebration* *Render*. His music is available from Augsburg Fortress, GIA, Abingdon Press, *Worship Today*, *Faith Alive*, in numerous hymnals, and at [www.gregscheer.com](http://www.gregscheer.com).

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Greg shares from his experience and expertise - I appreciate all of the practical tips and helpful explanations. This book is also great for group discussions - every chapter has discussion questions that should generate great conversation.

As an avid book reviewer, I classify books into three categories: (i) so-so books that I'd sell away, (ii) 5 star books that I'd keep on my shelf for future reference and (iii) 6 star books that I'd purchase additional copies to give away. To this gem of a book, it's an easy choice to be considered for the 6 stars. Scheer grounds his book with Scripture (no noticeable opinions or assertions I found),

providing thorough research (both historical and present day), illustrates theological principles with modern day analogies/illustrations, and somehow packing it all into a highly practical and reflective package. There were also plenty of diagrams, charts and pictures to visually complement ideas put forward, extremely apt quotes from historical Christians, an extensive recommended book list scattered all over the chapters and an impressive footnoted bibliography. At 283 pages, Scheer targets a very specific audience - it is directed primarily at worship directors (and secondarily pastoral staff/lay leaders/worship band members) who care enough about their church's worship condition/climate to digest a book of this length. I'd imagine that any further brevity would sacrifice the quality and clarity of the content. One of the most profound takeaways was food for thought found right at the preface - how would we plan our funeral service to be executed and what meaning do we hope those attending would take with them? I received this book from the Baker Publishing Group's Blogger Team Program for the purposes of providing an unbiased review. All views are my own.

In a really good way, reading this book made me feel like a child again. Finally, I've found a worship primer written for normal people. The writing is clear, his summarizations are succinct, and his pictures, discussion questions and activities are memorable. The author doesn't make any assumptions about what you might already know and he doesn't waste time showing you what is necessary for you to begin. I found this to be a very engaging text "a book to not just be read, but to be used! There were three components of this book that I especially appreciated: 1) His pictures! Scattered throughout the book are visualizations of what he is saying. Every single picture is both really simple and really illuminating. Whether it is on the definition of different components of worship (28-29); worship as nourishment-in-action (51); a visual of the liturgical church year (74); the roles of congregational songs (147-154); theological architecture (199-200) or the flashlight funnel of distributed leadership (258), the pictures help the reader to see the forest from the trees. 2) His questions! Oh, his questions are really good! He realizes that all too often, we ask the wrong questions: "What would my people like? Who will get upset about it? How long will it take? Instead, we should be asking questions that will help us go deeper: What does the Bible say? How have Christians worshiped in the past? What do my people need?" Scheer begins the book with a potent one: "What kind of worship do I want to take to the grave with me?" (19) Beginning with the end in mind helps us to know where we want to go. As well, before every chapter he has a paragraph titled, "Before you begin" which includes a thought provoking question to get you started. So many of these are phenomenal!

plan on utilizing some of these questions in my own upcoming church worship team meetings. His questions force substantial processing and have a lot of potential for clarifying for actual worship teams what our stances should be on these practical issues of leadership each of us deals with, often.<sup>3)</sup> His recommendations! Peppered throughout the book are little boxes titled, "Further learning." As a primer, this is really helpful. His suggested resources include a lot of really, really good books some I had never heard of (including the one I just bought which looks so, so good, *The Worship Sourcebook*, 2nd Edition). Although, in his suggested further reading on public prayer on page 86, I wish he would have included the recent book by Jeffrey D.

Arthurs, *Devote Yourself to the Public Reading of Scripture: The Transforming Power of the Well-Spoken Word*, which is in my mind, one of the better more practical resources for normal pastors working in normal churches. I would recommend this book to every pastor I know because this isn't just a book that can be read in the church, this is a book that can be used for the church. \*Full Disclosure: I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for my honest review. All opinions offered above are mine unless otherwise stated or implied\*

With the credentials "composer, author, musician, and minister of worship" on your resume, you would assume the individual knows a thing or two about worship. That is certainly true of Greg Scheer in his book, *Essential Worship: A Handbook for Leaders*. His book is a primer on worship and covers everything from principles to practices of worship. The author begins by laying out the basic principles and definitions of worship. He then looks backwards to examine the biblical and historical roots of worship. With this as a foundation, he then delves into the role of music and the arts in worship. In the introduction, the author explains that he came from a charismatic background, or as he describes himself "a failed Pentecostal". He later served in a Presbyterian Church and is now serving in the Christian Reformed Church denomination. It is helpful to know his background because his views on worship reflect those perspectives and denominational practices. He emphasizes following liturgy and the use of the lectionary, as well as celebrating communion on a weekly basis. While the book is comprehensive, I found it too detailed for my own interest. It began to feel like a textbook designed for a class for worship leaders. It felt like worship was portrayed from a worship leader's viewpoint rather than a balanced perspective. While his perspective on music and the arts is helpful, he downplays the role and importance of preaching. As a senior pastor, I was put off by his description of a typical worship service as a "mini-concert followed by a lecture." Disclosure: I received this book free

from Baker Books through the Baker Books Bloggers [...] program. The opinions I have expressed are my own, and I was not required to write a positive review.

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