

Cedar Crest BFC Philosophy of Worship

Approved by Board or Elders September 16, 2025

Our mission at CCBFC is “to glorify the Triune God by exalting Him, edifying and equipping His Church, and evangelizing the world with His Gospel.”

Core Value #1 - Worship: “We value the Worship of our Triune God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), both in our individual lives and when the church gathers corporately. We value worship in the home that centers around God’s Word, prayer, singing praises to His name, and living in accordance with the gospel. We value corporate worship that is prescribed in God’s Word that exalts the triune God and the salvation that He has provided for His people.”

Each Lord’s Day, Christians around the world gather to make much of Jesus Christ. Based on the context of each of these gatherings, faithful worship services fall within a spectrum of acceptable expressions. In light of our (1) mission and core values, (2) God-ordained ministry staff, (3) church culture, (4) local and global church history, and (5) community, what follows are some of the key understandings and philosophical emphases that give shape to our worship services.

God-Centered

All people worship something. Since our ability to worship God was broken at the fall, God has redeemed us so that we can proclaim His glory (1 Pet. 2:9-10). While He is glorious without our worship, it is our purpose and greatest joy to know Him and make much of Him (Ps.16:11, Phil. 3:8). We, then, gather to exalt and encounter the living God—in obedience to His Word and openness to His Spirit—not to placate, charm, or comfort the lost, nor entertain or pacify the saved. This encounter benefits the believer and serves as a powerful witness to the unbeliever (1 Cor. 14:24-25, Matt 5:14-16).

Therefore, we pursue worship that comes from a deep sense of the greatness of God, seeks humbly to express and inspire that same sense, and strives to avoid distractions of error, artificiality, pride, or anything unworthy of God.¹ Gatherings, then, are evaluated primarily by asking things like:

Did I obey God’s Word?

Did I give Him my full attention?

Did I prepare and serve Him to the best of my ability?

Did I show love to His people?

Right worship is centered on God.

¹ John Piper, “The Curse of Careless Worship” (sermon, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN, November 1, 1987).

Trinitarian: Father Initiated, Christ Mediated, Spirit Applied

The three persons of the Godhead have distinct and coinciding roles in our worship:

- **The Father** has initiated worship by creating us for his praise (Isa. 43:21), making provision for our redemption (Eph. 1:5), revealing himself to us in the scripture and in Christ (John 1:18), and pursuing us daily (Phil. 1:6).
- **The Son**, Jesus Christ, is our “High Priest” (Heb. 4:14). His perfect sacrifice and resurrection fully atone for our sins and allow us to come before the Father. As we worship, he mediates between us and the Father, making our offering acceptable (Heb. 13:15) and leading us as the only man to ever worship perfectly. In His life, the character and glory of God are revealed in human terms (Col. 1:19).
- **The Spirit** applies Christ’s work to our lives (Titus 3:4-6). He directs our minds towards Christ and opens our eyes to the truth of who God is (John 16:13-15, 1 Cor. 2:10), revealing the true reality, presence, and power of Christ to us (2 Cor. 3:18). He convicts us of sin (John 16:8) while empowering us to worship in the light of grace (Rom. 8:15-16).

Scriptural Dialogue

If our worship is to be truly God-centered, it must be rich with His Word. Scripture not only shows us who God is, it reveals His will for us as it instructs us in holy living and gives us the language with which we can appropriately respond to His greatness.

In worship, we engage in a dialogue with God shaped by Scripture—a pattern of **Revelation & Response**. In scripture-filled readings, creeds, and songs, as well as the Lord’s Supper, testimonies, and baptism, God reveals His glory, our sin, His redemption, His faithfulness, and His will. We respond by praising, confessing, giving thanks, petitioning, and dedicating ourselves with prayers, songs, and silent meditation. As we immerse ourselves in His Word, we trust that our thoughts, actions, and lives will be shaped by it—continually transformed into that which pleases God, even as we rest in the finished work of Christ.

Congregational Responsibility & Commitment

Scripture is clear that the work of ministry is not only for pastors, but for all believers (Eph. 4:12, Heb 10:24). While paid ministry staff and lay elders—especially the Lead Pastor and Director of Worship—are entrusted with planning the elements of the gathering, it is the joyful responsibility of every believer to lay hold of those elements and engage with them as we remember and renew our commitment to God. We:

- Give attention to scripture readings and sermons,
- Encourage one another and our leaders through our countenance and presence,
- Echo the “amen” of a prayer in our hearts and, sometimes, with our voices,

- Sing to God and others—not only with our lips, but with our spirits and minds
- Prepare by walking with God and worshiping him throughout the week, and
- Come actively looking for ways that God would use us.

A faithful, consistent commitment to gathering is a vital part of this calling (Heb. 10:25). Though transformation often comes in slow degrees (2 Cor. 3:18), the weekly gathering is one of the primary means by which God sanctifies His people. We resist discouragement when the benefits are not immediately evident, trusting that regular worship together shapes us into one unified body— “so that the world may believe that [Christ is Lord]” (John 17:21).

Music & Technology

Music and Technology have often been a source of controversy in the church. We affirm both as gifts from God—but not ends in themselves.

Music serves the church by teaching truth, helping us recall and realize it more fully, and uniting us as one body. For that reason, songs are chosen with care: arrangements should be singable and undistracting, and lyrics should be rooted in scripture—clear, memorable, and edifying to the body. As we select songs, our aim is to equip God’s people with words to cry out to Him in joy, grief, and every circumstance in between. Those selections draw from a variety of sources, including both time-tested hymns and fresh expressions of faith in God, keeping in mind those who were here before us, are here now, and who will be in the future (Psalm 89:1). We exercise discernment to avoid sources of music that may steer our people away from sound doctrine and practice.

Technology serves us by aiding in the communication of the Gospel: amplifying the Word with speakers, guiding liturgical movement through visuals, focusing our attention with lighting, and extending the ministry’s reach through broadcasting. Though not a necessity, we welcome tools that, when used and acquired reasonably, help us better engage with one another and with God.

Uniquely, music is more than just a gift to be enjoyed—it is a command to be obeyed. Scripture calls us to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), regardless of our natural ability, personal desire, or musical preference. God delights in the praises of His people and is enthroned upon them (Ps. 22:3). Therefore, we promote congregational singing, where every voice matters, and no individual gift is elevated above the collective worship of the church—the main sound of congregational worship is *the congregation*. That said, we also recognize that occasionally, a thoughtfully chosen and well-placed musical piece can serve the congregation by prompting deep reflection.

Regarding style, where Scripture gives no clear directive, we rely on two principles: **context** and **stewardship**. We use musical styles familiar enough to our context to invite

meaningful engagement, and seek to embrace and steward the gifts of those who He's placed in our membership—while also recognizing and accepting our limitations.

We hold firmly that the worship gathering is not for pursuing emotional catharsis, nor for showcasing talent. It is a sacred space where God—not the individual, not the music, not the technology—is to be exalted. In all decisions, we return to two guiding questions:

Will this bring glory or dishonor to God?

Will this elevate or diminish the church's participation?