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A weekly resource for those who lead Worship Ministries

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## Professional Tools Doug Lawrence

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## **Creating... The 7 Question Conversation...**

### **7 Questions to determine whether you're suited for a concert ministry**

#### **1. Are you sure you want to do the necessary marketing?**

When you choose to become a Christian concert artist, you are essentially deciding to run your own business, and one of the most exhausting aspects of any entrepreneurial enterprise is marketing. It will most likely occupy up to 80% of your time. It would be lovely if people were calling you night and day to come and sing or play your trumpet at their church or function, but that most likely will not be the case. They may never have heard of you, or worse—they know who you are and you rarely cross their mind. Marketing is a kind of art where you help people remember you and your product without having to embarrass yourself by blowing your own horn too loudly. You heard me! Yes, at some level, marketing is actually about blowing your own horn. If you are uncomfortable with this whole idea, then a career in giving concerts might not be for you.

#### **2. Do you want to identify yourself with someone else's ministry?**

When you enter someone else's church, you are essentially endorsing who they are and what they believe. In my own career this was one of my biggest struggles. Of course we would love to believe that all Christians essentially believe the same things, but that is not always so. As part of my "between songs testimony" with my audience, I once talked about a recent film I had seen. It was a Christian film with a remarkable story. The fact that it was only being shown in theaters is where I got messed up. At a reception following the concert, I was ripped up one side and down the other because I had exposed the congregation to talk of going to see a movie at a commercial theater. I bet you don't think that "theology" exists any longer? You're wrong—it's out there. You can respect other people's POV, but make sure it doesn't make your skin crawl. :-)

#### **3. Are you thick-skinned?**

I have been a concert singer in the secular world for more than 45 years, and, during that same period, I was concertizing in churches all over the country. I wish I could tell you that there is a vast difference between the two. There isn't. You will be critiqued no matter where you perform because people often feel this is their job—to find fault with you! (If you don't believe this, just ask any pastor.) It takes a fair amount of maturity to respect the opinion of others without having it destroy your life. BTW, criticism is the work of people who, for whatever reason, probably had no intention of enjoying your performance in the first place. At any given time, probably 20% of your audience falls into this category.

#### **4. Have you defined your story yet?**

Your story is the most important thing you bring to the concert stage. Whether it is printed in your bio or you tell it during your performance, people will engage with you because they relate to you and your unique history. Identification allows people to hear you on a whole different level. Tell your story!

#### **5. Can you be bigger than life?**

People who don't succeed on stage are people who apologize for being there! When you "take" the stage, do you have the ability to *take* the stage? Why should anyone spend over an hour listening to you if you don't command their

attention? For some, being bigger than life is a major obstacle to performing, and rightly so. If you want to have people look at you, listen to you, and engage with you, you must do something to get their attention—it's just that simple. If you are naturally shy, performance is going to be a rough track for you to follow.

#### **6. Have you examined your motives carefully?**

There are several motives which might lead to your pursuing a concert career. If you want to perform in front of people, this might be worth pursuing. If you want to minister to people from a position of leadership, this may be the right choice for a career. If you want to get rich, this probably isn't the way you're going to do it. If you want to start a business, this is probably as good as any (though times for concert artists performing in churches has fallen on some pretty rough times). So, in short, examine the whole of why you want this. If you have not considered all of the ramifications, then, no matter how strong your motivation, you may be in for some rough surprises.

#### **7. Are you sure you want to deal with people's "need" for you?**

An artist who performs on a stage does, in fact, take on a "larger than life" persona during the time he/she is performing. I've seen this in churches many times. It doesn't just happen at rock concerts! I remember a Christmas cantata performed at a church several years ago where there was a depiction of Jesus' death on the cross. I went "backstage" at the conclusion to congratulate the conductor, but encountered, instead, a woman falling at the feet of the gentleman who portrayed Christ. She was weeping hysterically and lifting her arms in praise. It was both touching and scary. Remember that when you *take* the stage, you also take control. Lines get blurred and people's emotions are stirred. With the joy of performing comes an awesome responsibility—are you ready for it?

I wish I had read this article 45 years ago... :-)

Blessings

Doug



**Doug Lawrence**

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*Doug has been a consultant to church leaders for 35 years and is anxious to be helpful to you in leadership, musical, and staffing considerations. Please click on his name above and email him. He's available to consult on the phone as well.*

#### **Take a look...**

This is a great way for singers to connect. There's a lot to see *and* hear!



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