

Overview

UPPERROOM is a church in Dallas, TX that focuses on ministering unto the Lord. They host non-stop worship and prayer sets morning, noon, and night, Monday through Saturday weekly. They seek to build a community that honors God, primarily by giving thanks to Him. UPPERROOM has developed a prayer model called T-W-I: Thanksgiving, Worship and Intercession.

Foundation of God's Presence

UPPERROOM champions the phrase, "His presence transforming lives." While God is omnipresent everywhere (Psalm 139), UPPERROOM highlights the fact that God is also in us and with us as a community of Christ (Psalm 51, Psalm 132, John 14). They describe this concept as God's "especially-near presence" or manifest presence.

Therefore UPPERROOM is presence-driven, meaning that their culture is built around seeking greater intimacy and closeness with God in a corporate congregational environment. They seek to minister to the Lord by being a church that is first for Him, not first for people in order to be a resting place for Him.

"Corporate prayer is a means to the Man, Jesus. We love to love on Him, and tend to Him." -Michael Miller, UPPERROOM Dallas

The Importance of Thanksgiving

UPPERROOM places a very significant emphasis on giving thanks to God. They believe that giving thanks brings God near and draws Him close. As lead pastor Michael Miller explains,

"In Psalm 100:4, we are instructed to 'enter His gates with thanksgiving.' Thanking God is a proper way to approach God. Once we thank God, we wait for Him to respond to our thanks. We must intentionally give thanks to God as we approach Him. When we are grateful, we recognize that we have received something from God. Thanksgiving opens our hearts to receive from Jesus. When we are not grateful, we become entitled and prideful. Indeed, God is attracted to a grateful heart."

See **Appendix A** for Scriptures that UPPERROOM highlights concerning the importance thanksgiving.

Prayer Model Mechanics

All prayer and worship teams at UPPERROOM follow the T-W-I prayer model.

T-W-I: Thanksgiving, Worship, Intercession

- Team Structure: Worship (Up to full band, up to two lead singers), Prayer team.
- Stage Arrangement: On stage, teams are arranged in a circle, facing one another. This is to reflect what we see in Revelation: the creatures, elders, angels and peoples are circled around the throne of God in heaven. The singers face away from the audience towards the back of the stage.

UPPERROOM emphasizes that hosting God's presence is an art, not a science. We are cultivating a relationship with the Person of Jesus. Relationships do not grow on formulas, and the same is true for a relationship with Jesus.

Step 1: Thanksgiving

Every prayer and worship team at UPPERROOM is expected to first thank God and bring Him thanksgiving. This can last up to 1.5 hours of a 2 hour set. They focus on giving thanks until they collectively discern their hearts connecting to God in a deeper way. They will not move on from this step otherwise. Spontaneous choruses can arise in this step from the lead singers.

Step 2: Worship

Step 2 is a shift in praise from thanksgiving into what they term "worship" which is entering into a more general variety of worship songs. These songs can focus on topics other than thanksgiving, and are either well-known songs and hymns, or spontaneous choruses as they arise.

Step 3: Intercession

In Step 3, the worship and prayer team move into interceding, praying on behalf of others and asking God to move.

Team Dynamics

UPPERROOM places a heavy emphasis on team pre-briefing and debriefing. As a church, they seek to cultivate long-lasting community and relationships. The community aspect is placed at a higher value than the amount of sets that are hosted at the church on any given week.

Michael Miller emphasizes that the pre-brief and debrief are critical components of their prayer and worship culture.

Team Pre-Brief: Connect Relationally & Prepare

The goal here is to connect relationally as a team and come into one accord through team prayer. Among other things, they discuss things like who the point is for worship, prayer, etc. Praying together is important.

Team Debrief: Reflecting & Growing Together

Immediately following their set, the team reflects and walks through the moves of the two hour set that they just lead. They ask questions such as:

- Why did we sing certain things?
- Why did we pray certain things?
- Was there unity in that set?
- Was there faith in the set? What was the faith for?
- Was there mutual submission to one another?

Appendix A

Scriptures Highlighting the Importance of Thanksgiving

1. **Romans 1:21** *"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him."* Paul explains that God turned people over to their evil, sinful desires because they did not give God thanks. God desires people to give thanks to Him.
2. **Revelation 4:9** *"And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne..."* The living creatures echo Romans 1 by giving God the proper response that He desires - honor and thanks.
3. **Luke 17:16-17** *"He fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks... Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"* Jesus shows here that the leper who came to give thanks is the only one who gave proper praise to God. Jesus was amazed that the other nine did not return to give thanks.
4. **1 Chronicles 16:7** *"Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the Lord by Asaph and his brothers."* Leader of the 4,000 musicians hired to constantly worship around the ark in David's Tabernacle, Asaph's primary instruction was to sing thanksgiving to the Lord.
5. **Jonah 2:9** *"But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you..."* It was after Jonah gave thanksgiving to God, that he was delivered and spit out of the fish.
6. **Philippians 4:6** *"do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*
7. **Psalms 92:1** *"It is good to give thanks to the Lord..."*