

Dance4Worship

Introductory Information

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I. Dance in the Bible

The Bible refers to people who responded to their redemption, salvation, and love for God through dance. Here are a few examples:

Exodus 15:20 - Miriam danced in response to God's triumph over the Egyptians and the redemption of God's people from the hands of Pharaoh.

2 Samuel 6:14 - David "danced before the Lord with all his might" as he led the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

1 Samuel 21:11 - The children of Israel praised King David by dancing and singing songs of his exploits.

Jeremiah 31:4 - Dance is a response to God's love for His people.

Jeremiah 31:13 - God's redemption causes His people to dance before Him.

II. Purpose of Community Style Dance:

The purpose of dance within the community during times of praise and worship allows God's people to celebrate with their whole bodies: mouths, hands, feet and minds. Dance has been an integral part of worship and celebration in Israel's ancient history and has been revived in modern day as a folk art. Modern Davidic Dance is choreographed to Israeli folk and contemporary Christian worship and is designed to allow dancers to worship together in unity and orderliness. Individualism is frowned upon, as the art of circle dancing allows worshipers to praise Yaweh together as a unified group, not as individual dancers. As the people raise their voices in song together to worship the King, Messiah

Yeshua, so also, the dancers express their love for God through movement and unified steps that give expression to the words they are singing.

Just as any type of music can be sung in either a carnal or a reverential manner, so also dance, particularly communal worship through dance, provides a reverential method of unified worship through motion and physical expression.

Dance4Worship is dedicated to providing individuals and communities with instructional videos and manuals to bring the ancient art of worship through dance back to God's people.

III. Important Things to Remember:

1. Dress Code (1 Timothy 2:9)

Individuals and communities who seek to utilize dance as a method of worship should remember that modesty is a virtue we should all strive to achieve. This is particularly important when it comes to communal dance. Because the concept of modesty can only be applied within the context of culture, certain cultures, including the individual church or community culture, often has varied methods of applying the idea of modesty. However, that being said, the highest standards should be applied when people come together to worship God through dance. Therefore, tight, revealing, or otherwise inappropriate clothing should be avoided and each community should carefully consider their individual dress codes such that honor and glory is given to God through not only the dance, but through the manner in which the dancers dress. A dress code protects the minds and hearts of both men and women. Because dance can be perceived as sensual, the manner of one's clothing is vital to maintaining a reverential atmosphere and avoiding temptation for onlookers and dancers alike.

The accepted standard for most Messianic communities that has been in place for well over 25 years and is something each community should carefully consider implementing is as follows:

Dancers should not wear any clothing that is tight or revealing, no shorts or short skirts, (pants and skirts should at minimum cover the knee), no slit skirts that can come open during a dance movement, no halter tops, tank tops or low cut blouses, no see through clothing, no spandex, and no bare shoulders or midriffs (be careful that shirts are not of a length that will come up, revealing the stomach area, when arms are raised during a dance movement).

In addition, when a song calls for holding hands if a mixed crowd of male and female dancers is present, the dance can be altered and performed without holding hands. Another option is to utilize two separate circles, (one for men and one for women that can be either in different locations or a smaller inner circle with a larger outer circle). While you may think this is an overly prude position to take, the comfort of all participates should be sought, and this is a sure fire method of achieving peace and modesty for all.

2. Music Selection

Many dances can be modified to fit a variety of music styles and selections. The key to enjoying community dance is to keep community worship simple, with basic steps and movements so that worshipers can concentrate on worship more than their feet.

If you are starting a more advanced dance group, intermediate and advanced dances can be more enjoyable for all; however, in an open invitation community setting, the easier and more basic dance movements, with a lot of repetition are optimal. It all depends on the level of experience and skill of the particular dance group.

3. Starting a Dance Ministry

Once you develop a number of individuals who know all of the dances you will be performing in a service it becomes much easier for new or inexperienced dancers to jump into the circle and follow along. The standard procedure for new dancers participating is to assure them that as long as they are moving in the right direction, completing all the movements perfectly is not necessary as they learn. However, you will find that beginner dance patterns are often simple enough for most individuals to pick up after a few times through the verse or chorus.

Dance leaders should set a goal of practicing all their dances each week in preparation for services. Coordination with Praise and Worship Leaders is highly recommended so that the dance leaders know which songs are coming up and in what order.

New dance songs or dances should be taught prior to the service and shown only after the dance leaders are comfortable with and know the steps to the new song. This will help avoid confusion and “fall out” of the dance circle which can be disruptive to the worship time.

4. Dance Workshops

Dance Workshops are a great way to generate interest and build a solid base on which to build a dance ministry. Dance4Worship offers workshops and instruction for groups looking to develop a dance ministry. Simply contact Dance4Worship to schedule a workshop in your area.

5. Private Instruction

Dance4Worship also provides private instruction upon request for those who would like to train as dance leaders to develop dance ministries within their communities. Contact Dance4Worship for more information.

6. Contact Information

Contact Dance4Worship through our website at www.dance4worship.com or email us at info@dance4worship.com or contact Christy by phone Mon-Thurs 9 AM-5 PM or Friday 9 AM to 3 PM, at 505-353-0371.