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**THINKING SURGICALLY WHEN  
LEADING LITURGICALLY**

**I. Intro**

- A. Every church has its own liturgy
- B. But some more than others
- C. Formal liturgy results in more constraints. These constraints can result in a frustrated worship leader
- D. It's possible to lead vibrant worship in the confines of a formal liturgy

**II. A lot to love**

- A. There is a lot we can appreciate about liturgy
  - 1. The church year tells the story of Jesus
  - 2. The depth and richness in theology
  - 3. The vast number of rich corporate prayers
  - 4. The structure it provides for Gospel-centered corporate worship services

**III. A lot of possible pitfalls**

- A. There are many dangers to watch out for
  - 1. Mindless repetition
  - 2. Rigidity
  - 3. Elevation of tradition to inerrancy
  - 4. Pomposity
  - 5. Grandiose prayers
- B. The temptation that lurks
  - 1. Empty words, empty prayers, empty songs
- C. Recognize the dangers

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#### IV. Owning it

- A. Like a good chef owns a recipe, to lead worship effectively in a liturgical church you have to “own” the liturgy
  - 1. Getting experienced and familiar with the ingredients
    - a. What are the different kinds of services?
    - b. What is required?
    - c. What is optional?
    - d. Where can you tinker with the recipe?
    - e. Where have adaptations crept in?
  - 2. Pay attention to the “mays”
    - a. A song of praise “may” be sung
    - b. The creed “may” be omitted
    - c. The officiant “may” say
    - d. Wiggle room can be found in the “mays”

#### V. Avoid token songs

- A. In liturgical churches, there are certain songs that get repeated more often than others. Some on a weekly basis. Paying attention to these songs is important.
- B. Songs lose their power when they’re sung every week.
  - 1. The Gloria  
*“When appointed, the following hymn or some other song of praise is sung or said, all standing...”*
  - 2. The Doxology
  - 3. Sanctus
  - 4. Agnus Dei  
- One of the greatest missed opportunities for preaching the Gospel through music in most liturgical churches
- C. Keeping a service that holds to a formal liturgy from feeling dead is all about making little changes like this.
- D. Quality and clarity decreases each time you make a copy of a copy of a copy.

**VI. Know your place in your church's history**

- A. You are not the best thing to ever happen to your church
- B. Honestly, where is your church on the trajectory of corporate worship?  
What decade are they in?
  - 1. The farther back they are: the more your role becomes that of a loving, pastoral, patient and faithful prodder
  - 2. The more "current" they are: the more your role becomes that of a careful chef, making sure the time-tested recipes don't lose quality or disappear altogether as a result of the new tweaks and ingredients that keep cropping up.

**VII. Understand your pastor**

- A. Operate in submission to him.
  - 1. You honor the Lord
  - 2. You honor your pastor
  - 3. You serve the church better
  - 4. You have the pastor's protection
- B. Ask for parameters.  
  
You need clarity.

**VIII. Learn the "capital equation"**

- A. Build capital. Spend capital. Build back capital.
- B. Hymns are your friend. Modern hymns are your secret weapon.
- C. It's not about you. But you can make it about you. You shouldn't.

**IX. Know when to retreat**

- A. Most things will take years longer than you think they should.
- B. You'll have to choose to ignore certain things in order to focus on others
- C. Avoid wasting your energy

**X. Guard against cynicism**

When and if you're leading a congregation in an unfamiliar direction, you will have many opportunities to become cynical and hardened. Pray for a soft heart.

**XI. Seriously consider staying put for the long haul**

People will go with you if they trust you. They can only trust you if you're committed to them and display you're trustworthy.

**XII. Conclusion**