

# TOO LOUD?

## AN EXPLANATION OF VOLUME LEVELS AT THE ROCK CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICES



Thanks so much for joining us today! We are so glad you have decided to make The Rock Church part of your worship experience this weekend.

This letter will try to help answer any questions you may have as they relate to the volume of our worship services.

The first thing we'd love for you to know is that all of the musicians and sound technicians at The Rock, have a sincere desire to lead the Church in corporate worship; they do not want to be a distraction in any way.

There is no "performance" mentality or pride in any way regarding volume in the church. Everyone involved in leading worship truly desires to "get out of the way" and allow people to connect with and respond to Jesus — with music and song.

Those who ask about our musician and volume levels should know that:

- We have hired an in-house Audio Professional who oversees actual, objective measurements of the sound level decibels (dBs) throughout every service within our auditorium.
- We have implemented a professional online tracking dB measurement system that monitors weekly services and notifies the pastoral staff if volumes exceed our below OSHA standard of 85-92 dB.
- All stage monitors have been removed and we have gone entirely to an in-ear system. This has drastically reduced stage volume.
- All guitar/bass stage amplifiers have been removed. There is NO volume coming off the stage from the guitars or bass. This means volume is all "direct" from the house speakers themselves.
- Drums are played in a professionally designed drum isolation room. This eliminates stage drum volume almost entirely.

Additionally, here is some important information regarding the actual volume levels in general:

- Normal talking voice volume is around 60 dB. This means that when you are speaking to another person in a face-to-face conversation, that is typically how loud dBs measure.
- Using a professional dB reader before church (to measure the volume of folks sitting in the Sanctuary and talking without music and without singing together) measures around 70dB.
- It's very important to note that we use an industry standard Professional dB reading system. We do NOT use an iPhone or home device as these are not accurate.
- Across the country, the average range for churches of our size and production, is 94dB for their worship services. We are well below this level.
- Our church worship music, with audience participation, ranges between 84dB and 92dB with vocal "spikes"; meaning they are very momentary. On average, our service runs at 88dB. That's 10dB lower than OSHA allowable noise exposure levels.

There are many parameters that factor into the best volume, and they change from day to day and even service to service. We don't try to make it too loud. We're not going for "as loud as we can get away with." In fact, we are engineering the sound of the room to appropriately and effectively support and express what is happening on stage and on the screens.

Cultural relevance drives us towards being confident with our sound, not timid. This level also changes with the level of engagement of the congregation. We know where it should be, and it has been validated by exhaustive checks, cross checks, consultants, contractors, engineers, guest engineers, etc.

We are confident that The Rock Church operates well within and, honestly, below OSHA standards for churches of our production and size. This should allow worshipers to feel at ease and comfortable in their worship experience.

When asked about worship volume, we strive to be absolutely considerate and sensitive to each individual's experience. We never want to minimize or attempt to "explain away" people's worship experience. In the best way we can, we will listen and hear any such concerns.

Jesus desires for His Church to worship freely in spirit and in truth. That is our heart.

Even so, we realize that many times, preferred volume levels can actually come down to worship music preference and style. For some, a quieter, more acoustic flavor is what they best prefer. Understandably, this would be quieter than what we are operating at with full music production. Knowing this, in a four-week rotation at The Rock, we attempt to have at least one or two variations of this particular acoustic style of music for the worship service. Additionally, given what we feel God has called us to in our culture, an upbeat, full production of music is equally important to the mission of our church as well.

As you can imagine, it is very hard to satisfy all musical tastes and styles. You may still have these questions:

### **"Are we too loud?"**

The answer, in all humility, is a confirmed, confident, and qualified 'no'. We are operating well below noise exposure regulations. This allows us to find the BEST volume to support each service — not the loudest volume.

### **"Are we monitoring the volume?"**

The answer is an enthusiastic and certified 'yes!' We work hard to meet and beat professional audio industry standards. We use top of the line equipment to monitor sound levels because we believe that we have the responsibility to not just comply with regulations and understand measurements, but to also be an example of safety in this area.

### **"But, it's still too loud for me!"**

If the volume is too loud for you, or this doesn't satisfy your concerns, or if you simply disagree, please know that we truly believe you and are sincerely sorry for your experience. We hope you can understand that we have worked hard to consider YOUR safety from anywhere in the room and will continue to exhaust every option to make your worship experience a pleasant one.

### **"What can I do?"**

First, if you prefer, there are ear plugs available at the Connections Booth in the Lobby. Second, there are a wide variety of quieter, seating options available. Our Sound Engineer confirms: "With how our auditorium is set up it's going to be a little louder in the back to middle sections, and a bit quieter on the sides and in the very front. Some of the quietest seats are all across the Sanctuary in the first two rows."

We sincerely hope this letter has helped communicate our spirit in regard to volume levels in our worship services. We also trust that we have addressed your concerns of safety and protection by implementing real measurements and comprehensive professional attention.

You can rest assured that we have taken every precaution we can. We have used every tool possible to prevent any hearing damage and to allow people to enjoy our times of worship together.

We also encourage you to listen to The Rock Music's worship songs for free online at [www.therockmusic.org](http://www.therockmusic.org) or on The Rock Church App.

It is our prayer that, within The Rock Church and The Rock Music, people encounter Jesus through worship and song in our services.

Sincerely,

The Pastors of The Rock Church