

# **A BALANCED APPROACH TO MUSIC AND WORSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

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## ***PURPOSE OF A MUSIC MINISTRY***

### **To worship God through music.**

Psalm 27:6 "And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord."

### **To praise God through music.**

Psalm 150:3-4 "Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe."

### **To lift the emotions of the heart.**

James 5:13 "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises."

### **To learn Scripture and spiritual truths by singing.**

Psalm 32:7-8 "Thou dost surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go."

### **To encourage one another with biblical truth through music.**

Ephesians 5:18-19 "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

### **To instruct and convict by the scriptural texts of the songs.**

Isaiah 55:11 "So shall My Word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

### **To introduce others to Jesus Christ through special concerts which can be an outreach to the unsaved.**

Psalm 40:3 "And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear, and will trust in the Lord."

## ***SPIRITUAL MUSIC COMES FROM SPIRITUAL PEOPLE***

The Levites separated themselves from the world, renounced their earthly inheritance, and consecrated themselves to God and His service for a lifetime.

### **The Old Testament musicians were very skilled.**

1 Chronicles 15:22 "And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was in charge of the singing; he gave instruction in singing because he was skillful."

2 Chronicles 34:12 speaks of the Levites who were skillful with musical instruments.

**Not only were they skillful, but there were many of them.**

1 Chronicles 23:3-5 "And the Levites were numbered from thirty years old and upward, and their number by census of men was 38,000. Of these, 24,000 were to oversee the work of the house of the Lord; and 6,000 were officers and judges, and 4,000 were gatekeepers, and 4,000 were praising the Lord with the instruments which David made for giving praise."

**This combination of sanctified, skilled, unified men produced meaningful worship.**

2 Chronicles 5:12-14 "And all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and two priests blowing trumpets in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying, 'He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,' then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."

**However, music offered from a wrong heart is unacceptable to God as worship.**

In Amos 5:23 God speaks to His people, "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps" because their hearts are far from God. Again, in Amos 6:5, God sends a judgement against those living luxuriously "who improvise to the sound of the harp, and...have composed songs for themselves," at the expense of worshiping and living for God.

### ***HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT THE MUSIC WE USE IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP?***

Are the words doctrinally sound? Is the text biblical? Does it stimulate spiritual thought? Does it inspire high spiritual ideals? Does it fit the need? Does it produce a wholesome response? Does it properly instruct? Does the music fit the text?

A good verse to determine the value of a musical piece is found in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."

### ***ESSENTIAL QUALITIES IN A MUSIC MINISTRY***

Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's direction, and soundness in Christian doctrine and its application in personal, daily life.

Enhancement, but never overshadowing, the teaching ministry, always mindful that the teaching of the Word of God is central in the church.

Broad in its range of musical content and style; always tasteful, but designed to speak to all in a diversified congregation.

Consistent in high quality, so that the Lord is glorified and the heart is blessed.

Offering a broad range of opportunity for those whom the Lord has gifted with musical ability, using instrumentalists as well as vocalists.

Encouraging those in the church who are not involved in the program, but are gifted in music

## ***HOW TO DEVELOP A CHURCH MUSIC MINISTRY***

### ***PERSONNEL***

- I. Minister of Music or Music Director
  - A. Spiritual Qualification
    - 1. Must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
    - 2. Spiritually sound in Christian doctrine (1 Tim. 3:2-13).
    - 3. Sensitive to the Holy Spirit's direction.
    - 4. Supportive of the pastor's teaching ministry (not isolated in music alone).
    - 5. Demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; Gal. 5:22-23).
  - B. Personality Qualifications
    - 1. Enjoys working with people.
    - 2. Good teaching skills and communication level.
    - 3. Ability to administer and organize.
    - 4. Must have a servant's heart.
  - C. Musical Qualifications
    - 1. Experience in choral and instrumental conducting.
    - 2. Experience in leading congregational singing.
    - 3. Integrity in musical taste (pastor and music director must have similar musical tastes).
    - 4. Additional abilities that would enhance the music director's ministry (but not essential):
      - a. Keyboard or instrumental proficiency.
      - b. Ability in arranging choral, orchestral and instrumental music.
      - c. Vocal or instrumental soloist.
- II. Accompanist (organ or piano)
  - A. Spiritual Qualifications - basically, same as for the Music Director
  - B. Personality Qualifications
    - 1. Able to take direction; not self-willed.
    - 2. Flexible.
    - 3. Even-tempered.
    - 4. Dedicated.
    - 5. Punctual.
  - C. Musical Qualifications

1. Proficiency on instrument.
    - a. Willingness to spend the necessary practice time.
    - b. Good sight-reader.
    - c. Capable of improvisations.
  2. Able to follow director, vocalist, instrumentalists, etc.
  3. Musical tastes similar to Music Director and pastor.
  4. Good repertoire of church music.
- III. Additional Personnel
- A. Music secretary.
  - B. Other choir directors: Children's, Junior High, High School, College.
  - C. Instrumental Director.

### *LAY MUSICIANS*

- I. Vocalists
  - A. Let your needs be known (church bulletin, newsletter, or announcement).
  - B. Set a time for auditions.
    1. By Music Director and/or music committee.
    2. Determine spiritual commitment.
    3. Keep records on all who audition.
      - a. Vocal quality.
      - b. Reading ability.
      - c. Pitch.
      - d. Vibrato.
      - e. Diction.
  - C. Note those of solo quality, duets, small ensembles, etc.
- II. Instrumentalists
  - A. Set time for auditions.
    1. By Music Director and/or music committee.
    2. Determine spiritual commitment.
    3. Keep records on all who audition.
      - a. Proficiency on instrument.
      - b. Reading ability.
      - c. Pitch.
      - d. Tone quality.
  - B. Solo or ensemble quality.
- III. Some suggestions in handling those who do not qualify vocally or instrumentally.
  - A. Encourage additional study.
    1. Private teacher.
    2. Community or private college.
    3. When some proficiency is achieved, ask him to return and re-audition.
  - B. Suggest another ministry in the church. For those who are tone-deaf or monotone, liken the situation to a person who is color-blind, but who wants to be an artist. Explain that in rare occasions the basic ability to see color or to hear pitch is missing. Therefore, it is wise for him to choose another ministry for which he has a natural talent.

## ***MUSICAL GROUPS***

- I. How many and what?
  - A. Depends on amount of musical talent found in your church.
  - B. Suggested vocal groups.
    - 1. Adult choir, children's choir, youth choirs.
    - 2. Select choral group (8-16).
    - 3. Vocal solo, duet, trio, quartet.
    - 4. Men's and women's choruses.
  - C. Suggested instrumental groups.
    - 1. Instrumental solo, duet, small ensembles.
    - 2. Orchestra.
  - D. Blend different instrumental combinations together for special numbers, or to accompany vocal solos or groups.

## ***REHEARSALS***

- I. Set a different time for each organized group.
- II. Long enough to accomplish goals.
- III. For those groups or soloists who normally practice on their own, the Music Director should be involved in at least one rehearsal prior to their ministering in the service.
  - A. Ask the soloist or group to submit three choices. If you do not like a particular number because of style, lyric content, range, etc., one of the other two numbers can be selected.
  - B. If you do not carefully monitor special music, the appropriateness, content, etc. will fall short of your expectations.
- IV. Sound system rehearsal
  - A. Before the service, rehearse all musical numbers, using the sound system.
  - B. The person scheduled to run the sound system for that service would also run the rehearsal.
  - C. Even if earlier in the week a musical group rehearsed with the sound system, they should still rehearse before the service. This is so all technical problems with microphones, cords, amplifiers, etc. can be corrected before the service begins. Otherwise, the problem will take place during the service.

## ***BUILDING NEEDS***

- I. Corporate worship area (sanctuary, worship center, etc.)
  - A. Large enough for growth.
  - B. Comfortable (pews, seats).
  - C. Good sight lines.
    - 1. Floor slopes upward from front to back.
    - 2. Platform high enough to allow visibility from every seat.

3. A fan-shaped auditorium is better than a long, rectangular-shaped room.  
Advantage with the fan shape is congregation is closer to the pulpit area.
- D. Easily darkened for multi-media presentations, overheads, slides, etc.
- II. Platform area
  - A. Choir loft.
    1. Tiered seating with a rise high enough between rows so choir members do not sing into the head of the person in front on them.
    2. Slight curve to the loft so choir members can hear one another.
  - B. Whether platform should be large enough to accomodate instruments.
  - C. Seating for ministerial staff, participants, etc.
  - D. Baptismal area in a position that allows its use with little or no physical changes to the platform; back wall, on the side, etc.
  - E. Organ chambers for pipes or electronics.
  - F. Pulpit.
    1. Raises and lowers and/or is easily removed.
    2. Overhead or video projector built in.
    3. Clock built in.
  - G. Lighting systems.
    1. Pulpit area bright.
    2. Fixtures accessible for adjusting and changing of bulbs, and on dimming system.
    3. House lighting (ceiling lights) bright and on dimmers.
  - H. Acoustics.
    1. "Live," reverberant sound (not a "dead" acoustical environment). This improves congregational singing, instrumental sound, etc.
    2. Shape of room: curved or varied surfaces at back and sides to reflect sound from having an echo or "slap."
    3. Heating and air condition system: compressors, blowers, fans sufficiently removed from the building so machinery rumble and rushing air is not heard in the room.
- III. Choir room and/or robing Room.
  - A. Large enough to accommodate choir and instrumentalists for rehearsal.
  - B. Seats on risers the same as the choir loft.
  - C. Choir folders and robes assigned to individual slots for each member.
- IV. Music Office.
- V. Storage (files, music stands, instruments, anthems, etc.). This area is often slighted, but very important!

### ***EQUIPMENT NEEDS***

- I. Sound System.
  - A. Adequate for building.
    1. Full sounding, not just light reinforcement.
    2. Usable for all needs (speech, music, tapes, playback, etc.).
    3. Professional sound consultation is essential in this area.
- II. Quality piano kept in tune.
- III. Quality organ (e.g., pipe or Allen Digital) kept in tune and in good repair.
- IV. Synthesizer.
- V. Optional equipment.

- A. Overhead or video projection for congregational singing.
- B. Music stands and orchestra lights (Manhasset).
- C. Handbells.
- D. Other musical instruments (second piano, timpani, chimes, other percussion instruments).
- E. Computer; used for department organization, communication, music notation programs (e.g., *Finale* from Coda Software), worship planning tools, MIDI sequencing, and sound editing.

### ***OTHER NEEDS***

- I. Church hymnal. We use *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration* published by Word Music, Inc.
  - A. Advantages
    - 1. Completely orchestrated
    - 2. Topically arranged
    - 3. Brief services with readings and medleys
    - 4. Responsive Scripture readings
    - 5. Indexes for scriptural resources
    - 6. Index of descants, reharmonizations, and choral endings
    - 7. Index of copyright owners and addresses
    - 8. Metrical index of tunes
    - 9. Index of hymns by what key they are in
- II. Copyright laws: anything copyrighted cannot be projected, recorded, or reprinted in any form including bulletins and songbooks without written permission of the copyright owner. To avoid endless paperwork requesting copyright permissions, there is a company that will do this for you for a yearly fee: Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. in Portland, Oregon. Phone: (800) 234-2446.

### ***CONTINUITY IN WORSHIP PLANNING***

The first step in planning any Worship Service is to have a quiet time with the Lord, asking Him to lead and direct you as to what should be accomplished. After this, spend some time thinking through the service in an orderly manner. We are encouraged by the Apostle Paul who said, "Let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner" (1 Cor. 14:40).

The flow of the service should be determined before putting the program together. Emotional peaks will naturally be reached. These can either be stifled or enhanced by what is programmed next in the service. Your sensitivity to programming is essential to produce a cohesive service.

### ***THEMATIC PLANNING***

All congregational hymns, special numbers, anthems, Scripture reading, sermon, prayer, any special events are related to one theme. Example: missions. All hymns and special numbers have a missionary emphasis. Even the offering appeal can be related. Message is also related to missionary work.

Other examples include: Praise to God; the Name of Jesus; Love; Joy; etc.

It is easier to start with the theme of the message and work your music from that. Or, start with a special holiday or event and work from that. Example: Communion, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, Baptism, Parent Dedication.

### ***PARTIAL THEMATIC PLANNING***

Everything except the message is planned around one theme.

### ***SIMILAR STYLE MUSIC***

If you have too much variance in style from one musical selection to another, your service may not be cohesive (although carefully chosen contrasts of style may also be effective). Keeping the style of music similar helps to create a unified service. Common elements may include musical periods, harmonic structure, instrumentation, key relationships, and rhythmic patterns. Musical periods can be mixed either by verbal introduction of the next number, or an instrumental interlude bridging the gap.

Experiment by playing the ending of one piece and the beginning of the next. Do they go together well?

### ***MUSICALS***

These are usually written with one theme, and some with congregational involvement. By planning the closing of the service to coordinate with the theme of the musical, the entire service can be thematic. This also includes classical presentations such as oratorios ("Messiah") and cantatas (Bach wrote over 300).

### ***CONCERTS***

Individually selected anthems, songs, and musical arrangements from many different sources can be stronger than a musical or collection performed in its entirety.

### ***NO THEME***

When there is no central theme to the service, the instruments, organ or piano can bridge from one song to another, beginning with the texture of the previous song and changing into the style of the next one. This can be totally improvised by a gifted person or by taking excerpts out of each song, putting them together, and coming up with a composite. Keys should be coordinated ahead of time between the organist, pianist, and Minister of Music. Excellent transitions can enhance any service whether or not it has a theme.

### ***SAME MUSICAL GROUP***

By using the same musical ensemble for all numbers, there is a similarity of vocal sound, instrumental sound, etc. There is also very little physical movement between numbers since there is no need to change positions on the platform from song to song.

## ***WORSHIP LEADER***

A worship leader enhances the service by introducing songs and hymns with relevant background or scripture.

## ***MECHANICS OF A SERVICE***

**Custodial:** Let this department know what you need for set up. Also, decide what temperature to have the worship center.

**Lighting:** This is either handled by the custodian, usher, or a special lighting person. If there are changes, give the lighting person clear instructions as to what and when. When having a multimedia presentation, if the speaker needs to refer to notes, make sure there is adequate lighting. The same applies for musicians that will be playing in a darkened auditorium.

**Audio-Visual:** Have a clear understanding of what is needed. If it is necessary to run a movie or video projector through the sound system, make sure all necessary arrangements are made ahead of time. If PowerPoint is used with video projector, make sure it works and has a competent operator. If major changes have to be made during the service to include an audio-visual presentation, try to restructure the service so that all the equipment can be in place ahead of time.

**Sound System:** Let the sound crew know ahead of time what will be necessary. For musical numbers have at least one rehearsal before the service with the sound crew. People involved in running the sound system should have a musical ear.

**Ushers:** There should be a head usher who informs the other men of the order of service and what is expected of them. See that there is a good supply of bulletins, visitor packets, registration cards, offering envelopes, etc. Their main concern should be the comfort of those who have come to the Worship Service.

**Counselors:** A good training program is necessary, with handpicked individuals under the total guidance of a senior counselor. Let the congregation know who they are (by name tags).

## ***PROGRAM PERSONNEL***

Contact all personnel involved in each service ahead of time. Good communication with people by notes and programs can make a service really work and run smoothly. Make sure those involved:

1. Arrive well ahead of the service.
2. Have a copy of the program.
3. Know how much time he is allowed for his part.
4. Be close to or on the platform.

**Pastor:** He can either decide the format himself or delegate this responsibility to another staff member (Minister of Music).

**Non-musical Participants:** Those who pray, read Scripture, give announcements, etc. should be contacted ahead of time and informed as to what is expected of them.

**Minister of Music:** He is responsible for the total coordination of the service.

1. Inform those involved with the mechanics of the service as to what is needed.
2. Arrange the platform for specific needs of that service (microphone stands, furniture, seating arrangements, plants, etc.).
3. See that all musicians are informed as to the order of the program.
4. Have all necessary music ready.
5. Arrange sufficient rehearsal time for special numbers.
6. Inform the musicians from what location on the platform they will present their numbers.
7. Think through the traffic patterns of people coming from and going to the platform.
8. Inform the choir, pastor, and any that participate when to enter and leave.
9. Instead of the organist, pianist, and director carrying large stacks of music separately, place all music in a loose-leaf notebook in the order in which it will be used.

**Organist:** They can enhance the flow of the service by:

1. Choosing appropriate preludes and postludes.
2. Adding musical interludes from one selection to another.
3. Adding background music.
4. Re-harmonizing the congregational hymn.

## ***CREATIVE WORSHIP PLANNING FOR THE BLENDED CHURCH SERVICE***

### **PRE-SERVICE OPTIONS**

- I. Prelude
  - A. Organ, piano or recorded music
- II. Congregational singing
- III. Prayer
  - A. Corporate
  - B. Silent
  - C. Meditation
- IV. Instruction or announcements

### **CORPORATE WORSHIP**

- I. Call to Worship (sung and/or spoken)
- II. Congregational singing
  - A. Hymns, choruses, responses
    1. A cappella
    2. Descants
    3. Rounds
    4. Counter melodies
    5. Ladies/Men only verses
    6. Free harmonization
    7. Modulations

- 8. Instrumental fanfares
- 9. Various instrumental combinations
- B. Memorized hymns and choruses
- C. Lyrics printed in bulletin
- D. Song sheets
- E. Overheads, slides, or PowerPoint
- III. Special Music
  - A. Vocal
    - 1. Choirs
    - 2. Select vocal groups/ensembles
    - 3. Solo, duet, trio, quartet
  - B. Instrumental
    - 1. Acoustic instruments
    - 2. Electronic instruments
    - 3. Combination of both
- IV. Scripture by pastor or congregation
- V. Prayer
- VI. Testimonies
- VII. Interviews
- VIII. Baptism
- IX. Communion
- X. Fellowship/greeting
- XI. Recorded messages (missionaries)

### **MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES**

- I. Praise for specific ministries
- II. Upcoming church events
- III. Offering (with special music for offertory)

### **MESSAGE**

- I. Teaching
- II. Preaching
- III. Exhortation
- IV. Multi-media

### **CLOSING**

- I. Invitation
- II. Prayer
- III. Ordination of pastors
- IV. Commissioning of pastors and special ministries
- V. Hymn
- VI. Choral benediction
- VII. Instrumental postlude