

I. Introduction and review.

II. Music is a gift of God.

A. The origin and purpose of music.

1. What is music?
2. Who were the first musicians? Gen. 4:21
3. Music can be used to glorify God Who loves to be praised in song. Ps. 47:6 69:30-31
4. Music is also used for secular purposes (good, bad and neutral). Gen. 4:21

B. Music was an important element of worship under the Old Covenant.

1. Israel praised God through corporate singing. Ex. 15:1f Num. 21:17
2. God appointed musicians to lead in worship. I Chr. 15:16 9:33 Neh. 7:1 Ps. 68:25
3. Instruments were used in worship. Ps. 150:3-5 68:24-25 92:13 98:4-6 149:3
Ex. 15:20 I Chr. 16:5,9,42 15:16 23:5 I Ki. 10:12 II Chron. 5:12 29:28 II Sam. 6:5
4. There was clapping and dancing and lifting up of hands. Ps. 150:4 46:1 28:2 63:4

C. Music is important in New Covenant worship. Rom. 15:9

1. Mary sang in praise to God. Luke 1:46-55
2. Jesus sang a hymn with his disciples. Matt. 26:20 Mark 14:26
3. Paul and Silas sang in prison. Acts 16:25
4. Local congregations sing praise to God. Eph. 5:19-20 Col. 3:16

D. Music in church history.

1. During the Middle Ages singing in worship was carried out by priests and monks.
2. The reformers brought back congregational singing.
3. Some are reverting to making the congregation into spectators.

E. There will be music in heaven. Rev. 5:9 14:3 15:3

III. Music needs to be used very carefully in worship.

A. Not all music is worship. Amos 5:23 Mt. 15:8

1. Singing without heartfelt worship is worthless. Mt. 15:8
2. Music without a text is not worship.
3. We are free to enjoy a wide variety of music outside of the worship service.

B. Music is very powerful.

1. Music expresses and stirs the emotions.
2. Music has a powerful dynamic in a group.
3. Music can be used for great good.
4. When is music worship? *When it is being offered by Christians, intentionally to honor God, offered in faith through the finished work of Christ. (Kauflin)*

C. Because music is so powerful, we need to be careful not to misuse this gift.

1. Music in worship can become man centered – a performance mentality.
2. Music can be wrongfully manipulative.
3. Music can divide God's people.
4. Music can become an idol.

IV. How should we use music to praise God in corporate worship?

- A. The words to be sung (the text) must be carefully chosen. Phil. 4:8**
1. Some believe we should only sing the Psalms. I Pet. 1:10-12 Ps. 33:3
 2. The Psalms provide an excellent model for our worship in music. Ps. 75,76,66
 3. The text must be doctrinally sound and God centered. John 4:23-24 Phil. 4:8
 4. Texts should be understandable, suitable for singing, and should reflect the common experience of the congregation. I Cor. 14:15
 5. Texts should be substantive and not too repetitive.
- B. The music which to which we sing the text also important. I Co. 14:26,40**
1. The melody should fit the text. Pr. 25:20 Lu. 7:32 Js. 5:13
 2. The melody should be singable and aesthetically pleasing.
 3. The musical style should be appropriate for the congregation.
 4. Quality and appropriateness are hard to precisely define.
 5. We are not, however, musical relativists.
- C. What is the purpose of the accompanists and the worship leader? Ps. 150:3-6**
1. Their purpose of accompaniment is to help the congregation to sing.
 2. Musicians should not draw attention to themselves.
 3. They should be skilled and play to the best of their ability. I Chr. 15:22 Ps. 33:3
 4. Musicians should be spiritually qualified.
 5. What instruments are appropriate in worship? Ps. 150 Re. 5:9 8:2
- D. Is it biblical to have “special music” in worship: choirs, solos, duets, etc?**
1. There were choirs in the Old Testament. Neh. 12:31,38,40 I Chron. 15:27
 2. We are told to sing to one another. Eph. 5:19
 3. We encourage people to compose songs and hymns to share with the congregation and to teach us new songs. Ps. 33:3 40:3 144:9 Isa. 42:10 Rev. 5:9 14:3
 4. Special music needs to be handled with great care.
- E. What musical style is most appropriate in worship?**
1. What are some strengths and weaknesses of the great hymns of the faith?
 2. What are some strengths and weaknesses of contemporary worship music?
Ps. 33:3 40:3 144:9 Isa. 42:10 Rev. 5:9 14:3
 3. We should be patient and charitable with one another. Rom. 15:1-7 Phil. 2:3-4

V. Concluding applications. II Sam. 6:5 I Chron. 13:8 Eph. 5:19

Discussion questions

1. What is the origin of music?
2. How can music be powerfully used for good?
3. How can music be powerfully used for evil?
4. Give examples of musical forms which might be inappropriate for worship.
5. What are some potential misuses of God’s gift of music?
6. What are the characteristics of a good song or hymn text?
7. What are the characteristics of a good worship tune?
8. What is the purpose of those who accompany our singing?
9. What are some strengths and weaknesses of hymns?
10. What are some strengths and weaknesses of contemporary worship music?

Grace Bible Church

Music Guidelines

Purpose

Music is one important means by which God's people are to worship Him (Ps.90-100). In addition, music is to edify (strengthen and encourage) God's people in the faith. (Eph.5:18-20; Col.3:15-16). Because of the importance of music in worship, these guidelines are mainly intended to apply to music in the worship services of Grace Bible Church. However, they should generally apply to those who lead music in other meetings.

Theologically Accurate

The words should present an accurate view of God, Christ, and the plan of salvation (Jn.4:23,24; Col.3:16). Songs written from a non-reformed theological perspective should not be used. However, there are authors who are not reformed who have written songs which are God or Christ-centered and true in their statements. Insofar as they focus on the things which we hold in common and speak of scriptural truth, we rejoice to sing the songs of these authors (1Cor.8:4).

God-Centered

The words should be God-centered vs. man-centered. This is the essence of true worship. We are ascribing "worth" to God and therefore our music should cause us to focus on God, and by implication, the persons of the Trinity. The Psalms are excellent examples of the range of themes (prayers of faith, praise, thanksgiving, confession of sin, etc.) that may be used in music. As there is a horizontal as well as a vertical dimension in worship, it is appropriate for songs to reflect upon one's experience with God, as long as that experience is shared by the average believer. Again, the Psalms are excellent examples of this and at the same time, do not overshadow the primary focus on God's glory.

Understandable

In worship, we ascribe to God that which is His. We express our understanding of His nature and His acts and thus praise and glorify Him. Praise and worship must, therefore, involve the mind and understanding (1Cor.14). We must understand and think upon the things of God in order to praise and worship Him properly. Songs must be understandable to the congregation. This implies that music should have a level of "accessibility" that is culturally sensitive in order to be understood by the congregation. The words should not be confusing or require lengthy explanation in order to be understood. This can be accomplished through a balance of complex and simple songs (compare Psalms 23, 117, 131, 133 to 68 and 119).

Music Style and Quality

God cares about the quality of our music. For example, the Bible places an emphasis on the "skillfulness" of the instrumentalists, singers and craftsman (1Chron.15:22; 28:21; Ps.33:3). Therefore, the quality of the music, quality of the text, and the quality of the song used to communicate biblical truth must be considered in the worship of God. We also recognize that there are "circumstances" in music, such as musical styles, that are not specifically addressed in the Scriptures. Insofar as music is concerned, we do not believe there is one specific style or genre of music that is more "biblical" than another. Appropriate styles/genre of music should be determined as to what is most edifying (1Cor.14:26) to the congregation. Primarily, the style should reinforce the words of the song and not obscure or distract. The music should be fairly easy for the congregation to sing. If the music is too difficult (i.e., excessive syncopation), it may distract from the words. If the music has strong negative cultural associations for the congregation, this too may be a sufficient distraction and thus not be edifying.

Instruments

In Old Testament worship, a wide range of instruments were used in worship (Ex.15; Psalm 68:24-25; 98:4-6; 149:3; 150:1-6). We believe the principle of edification applies to what instruments should be used, along with a consideration of musical quality. Primarily, the instruments should aid the singing of the congregation, not overwhelm it.