

1. Checklist for the Music Is it...

- Scriptural** or sensual in the words and in the attitudes portrayed (Col. 3:16)
- Scholastic:** Does this music teach, uplift, edify, encourage, or admonish (Col. 3:16, Eph. 4:29)
- Spirit-filled:** Is the music consistent with the Holy Spirit's leading -- does the music point people to Christ or to the singer? (Eph. 5:18, 19)
- Sound in Doctrine:** Does this music teach sound doctrine? (Titus 2:1)
- Separated:** Is this music clearly not worldly? (II Cor. 6:17)
- Superior:** Is it excellent? Is it your best? (I Chron. 15:22)
- Sacred:** When I stand before God, will I be glad I listened to/performed/performed in the manner I did this music? (Rom. 14:12)

2. Checklist for the Musician Am I...

- Holy:** Am I Scriptural --am I right with God? Am I aware of the Lord's presence as I sing?
- Holy Spirit Filled:** Am I filled with/directed by the Holy Spirit?
- Non-Hypocritical:** Do I live what I am singing about?
- Hard Working:** Have I thoroughly prepared?
- Honoring God:** Am I using a God-honoring style? Is it the best that I can do?
- Humble:** Do I have a servant's heart, or do I perform for the praise of men?
- Helpful:** Am I doing my best to communicate? Am I concerned about edifying?



CHURCH MUSIC HANDBOOK

Compliments of Asaph Music Co.
www.asaphmusic.com

Asaph
MUSIC CO.

Part 1: Why do we have a music program?



Music programs have become an integral part of New Testament churches for several reasons. First, the Old Testament sets forth an example of a highly organized system of music instruction and performance. Second, we know that God Himself is a participant in music and commands His children to “sing unto the Lord.” Third, music in the church can help the church fulfill its purpose of winning and discipling people.

A. The Biblical Precedent

The first musician mentioned in the Bible is Jubal (7 generations from Adam), who is called the father of those that handle the harp and the organ (Gen. 4:21). We realize, of course, that music existed long before that in eternity past. Here are several examples: Lucifer was created with musical instruments as part of his body (Ez. 28:13); God sings (Zeph. 3:17); and in Job we find that the “morning stars sang together” at the creation of the world (Job 38:7).

When God instituted formal worship with the advent of the tabernacle in the wilderness, whole families of the tribe of Levi were set apart for the sole purpose of singing and playing musical instruments, as well as training others to do the same (I Chron. 9:33). This practice carried over into the more permanent temple built by King Solomon (II Chron. 5:13). Solomon’s father, King David, is perhaps the most famous musician in the Bible, playing his harp before King Saul (I Sam. 16:23) and authoring the majority of the Psalms (songs).

Many of the musical groups organized in the Old Testament were quite large: a 4,000-member orchestra (I Chron. 23:5), 288 singers and instrumentalists (I Chron 25:1-7), a

Psalms 118:14 The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

Isaiah 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Isaiah 51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

Zephaniah 3:17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Zechariah 9:14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

1 Corinthians 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Ephesians 5:18, 19 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Chronicles 16:23 Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation.

2 Chronicles 5:12-14 Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

2 Chronicles 20:21, 22 And when he [Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

2 Chronicles 29:30 Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Psalms 30:4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Psalms 33:2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

Psalms 40:3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

huge choir and orchestra with 120 trumpet players (II Chron. 5:12), 200 singing men and women (Ezra 2:65), 245 singing men and women (Neh. 7:67).

B. The Biblical Perspective

We know that God views music as important, because according to Scripture, all three parts of the Godhead participate in music. In the Old Testament, **God the Father** sings (Zeph. 3:17) and plays the trumpet (Zech. 9:14). In the Gospels, we read that **God the Son**, Jesus, sang hymns with his disciples (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:26). In the epistles, we learn that being filled with **God the Holy Spirit** and the Word of God causes the believer to sing (Eph. 5:18, 19; Col. 3:16).

Believers are commanded to sing to the Lord. The phrase "sing unto the Lord" is found at least 16 times in Scripture. The following two verses are examples of what the Bible says about singing:

"Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, [and] his praise in the congregation of saints."
Psalms 149:1

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Colossians 3:16

Music will be a part of heaven. The book of Revelation speaks of the songs that will be sung in the future as the church age comes to a close (Rev. 5:9, 14:3).

C. Our Purpose

Church music is designed to be both educational and inspirational. It must be Scriptural and therefore doctrinally

sound. Historically, congregational music has been used to combat heresy and false teaching.

Our music should cause the listener to receive and respond to the preaching of God's Word. Music before the message prepares the heart and sets the tone for the service, while the invitation helps to gently prod the listener to respond to what he has heard.

Congregational singing gives people the opportunity to participate in the church service and to obey the Bible command to praise the Lord in song. Other than the offering, the song service is the only portion of the service in which the congregation actively participates.

Part 2: Who participates in the music program?



The music director organizes the music program under the leadership of the pastor. All other musicians including accompanists, singers and instrumentalists are church members, volunteers meeting certain qualifications.

A. Musicians with a Good Spirit

The primary prerequisite for a church musician is a servant's heart. He must view himself as a minister, not an entertainer. The person who sings or plays an instrument in church for the praise of men is sadly misguided. God hates pride (Pro. 8:13). The musician must seek to be a blessing first of all.

As good stewards of the abilities God has given, musicians should be constantly seeking ways to improve and develop their musical skills (I Pet. 4:10, 11). Faithfulness and loyalty are key ingredients to a successful music program. If you must miss a scheduled performance, it is imperative that you

Good, clear introductions will ensure that the singers know when to come in and will set the tone for the piece.

E. Instrumentalists

Appropriate music for offertories include hymns and gospel songs that are familiar to the congregation. Do not play purely classical pieces or numbers that have no Christian content. Your goal is to cause the listener to sing along with you in his heart and mind.



Offertories are not "fillers." They should be played with an attitude of ministry.

Part 4: What does the Bible say about music?

Because there are over 500 references to music in the Bible, there is no excuse for the Christian musician to be ignorant of what God thinks about the subject of music. The following verses are a small sampling.

Genesis 4:21 And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

Exodus 15:2 The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

1 Chronicles 13:8 And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

C. Soloists & Ensembles

Specials are performed by choir members who are willing and able to participate in smaller groups or as soloists. It is your responsibility to choose appropriate music (see checklist on the back), choose an accompanist and schedule rehearsal times. The music director is available to help you with these if needed. No soundtracks are to be used.

Music should be memorized or mostly memorized. This will allow you to maintain eye contact with the congregation and facilitate the communication of the message of the song. If the song does not speak to your heart as you are singing, it will not speak to the heart of the listeners either.

Strive to sing with:

- ♪ Skill (I Chron. 15:22)
- ♪ Passion (I Cor. 10:31)
- ♪ Understanding (I Cor. 14:15, Ps. 47:7)
- ♪ Energy (Ecc. 9:10).

D. Accompanists

When you are accompanying congregational or choir numbers, carefully follow the music director. When you are accompanying soloists or ensembles, allow the singer to lead. Be sensitive to tempo and dynamic changes.

Be flexible when scheduling rehearsal times. Remember to keep a servant's heart when working together with the singer.

Choose an accompaniment style that will enhance the vocal performance, not distract from it. This is not the time to be "showy." If people are watching you instead of the singers, you have become a distraction from the message.

inform the music director so he can make alternative plans.

B. Musicians with Good Standards

An anyone who performs music in the church must first of all be a Christian. Secondly, they must be a church member in good standing and of good report. Third, if they sing solos or in an ensemble, they must be a member of the choir; exceptions may be made from time to time upon approval from the pastor or music director.

Modesty on the platform is also very important. We are in front of the congregation and must realize that people are looking to us to set the example of what a normal, Bible-believing Christian looks and acts like. Men should always wear a coat and tie. Ladies should always be modest, avoiding such things as skirts above the bottom of the knee; slits; sleeveless, low-cut, tight, or see-through clothing. Remember that the platform is higher than the level of the pews. We must not allow the clothes we wear to distract the listener from the message we are trying to present.

Because participants in the music program share the platform with the pastor, they must be willing to set good standards for themselves. Conduct at home and in public should be above reproach. The way we act outside of church will either reinforce the message we sing or prove us to be hypocrites (Col. 4:5).

Part 3: What can we do to make our music program better?

God is certainly worthy of our best. The following paragraphs contain helpful pointers for making the music program excellent and consistent with the philosophy of our church.



A. Performance Objectives

The music we perform has a message that is directed both to God and to the congregation. Our primary goal, then, is to remove all distractions that would keep the message from being communicated clearly and effectively. When we are done, the listener should think “What a great God,” not “What a great singer.” That does not mean, however, that our singing should not be the very best we can make it. Poor singing distracts from the message.

Notice the following extremes, all of which can and should be avoided:

Vocal Technique:	Poor technique, sliding, scooping	Overly artistic
Rhythm:	Dull, dragging	Sensual, rock
Facial Expression:	Scared, blank, unhappy	Put-on, artificial
Clothing:	Sloppy, immodest	Loud colors, faddish
Microphone:	Too far away, quiet	Too close, breathy, hides face

B. Choir Members

The adult choir is open to church members in 7th grade or above upon the approval of the pastor and music director. Younger children may perform specials under the leadership of a qualified adult.

Rehearsal times are very important. We have only a short time each week to prepare music for the services, so it is imperative that each member is in his seat with music ready when rehearsal begins.

- ♪ Be sure to bring a pencil to mark special instructions in the music.
- ♪ If, for some reason, you cannot make it for a particular service, *it is your responsibility to let the music director know ahead of time, if possible.* This will allow him to make other arrangements as necessary.
- ♪ Listen and follow instructions carefully.
- ♪ The music director is listening for the overall sound. If you need help with a certain section of the music, please ask.

When the choir is on the platform, remember that someone is looking at you all the time. Your face and body language must help communicate the message of the song.

- ♪ Please avoid excessive movement.
- ♪ Be aware of what is happening in the service and have your music ready when it is time to sing.
- ♪ Keep your eyes on the music director when he is leading the choir number, and when he is conducting the congregational songs as well.
- ♪ Music must be held at the proper height so that you can both **see** the music and the choir director, as well as **be seen** by the congregation.
- ♪ Energetic singing of the congregational numbers help draw the congregation into the spirit of the service.



Unity among choir members is a must.

*“It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers **were as one, to make one sound** to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD.”*

2 Chronicles 5:13