

The Encouragement Newsletter

The Music Ministry-Part 2

Welcome to The Music Ministry—Part 2. In this issue, I will share my thoughts on the topics—Order of Musicians, Sanctification of Musicians and delve a little bit into Musician's & Compensation, which was briefly mentioned in Part 1. Typically, music ministries focus on the musical arrangements of the instruments and vocals. However, this should not be the primary focus. Visiting many assemblies, I have heard some dynamic musical arrangements, but most often, when I have the opportunity to speak with those involved in the music ministry, I learn about the organization or lack thereof. It is amazing how people can come and go as they please because they are "needed". Generally, individuals that do as they please have vocals skills or musicianship that will make your head spin, but this behavior coupled with the lack of order causes much inner turmoil with the music team. In the next few pages, I hope to lay out or make clear how the Lord loves the awesomely gifted musicians and singers in the body of Christ, the importance of this area of ministry and how He guided King David in providing a pattern of organization for those assigned to minister in music before His presence. After you read this, I would love to dialog with you. I invite you to share your comments, thoughts and questions at [Bloggin' the Journey @ the E-Place](#). Let's move on to the first topic at hand....

Let all things be done decently and in ORDER.



In this section I want to explore 1 Chronicles 13, 15 and 16 I believe these chapters are imperative for explaining the order for the music team. I will be breaking down each chapter.

Do you have your Bible? Let us start with 1 Chronicles chapter 13. This chapter details the events of King David's first attempt to bring the ark (God's presence) to the City of David. A decision was made to have individuals unassigned and unauthorized by God to carry the ark. This decision resulted in death because the wrong folks were assigned to handle the ark. *(Please read 1 Samuel 4 to understand how the ark was taken.)* Someone did not read the instructions set forth for handling His presence. The lesson we learn here is, it is so important that the right people are assigned and authorized to do the right task.

1 Chronicles chapter 15 details the preparation for bringing back the ark (God's presence) to the City of David. This time, King David (i.e., senior leader) made sure the correct people were in place to carry the ark, not pushing the ark in a cart. Verse 2 tell us that King David placed the responsibility of carrying the ark on the Levites, as ordered by God in Numbers 1:50-55. No one was to carry the ark but the Levites. David gave instruction for the Levites to prepare themselves through the sanctification process to do the most holy act of carrying the ark in verse 12. Sanctification is still relevant to be carriers and couriers of His presence. The natural process the Levites followed for sanctification would not be followed today, but the process represents what we should do spiritually in our heart and mind for proper service to the King. This is a process of separation from what defiles and make us unclean. Yes, we are a work in progress, but progress is what we should be mindful of as we seek to honor the King with our life and service to Him. I will provide more on this in the pages that follow. King David instructed the Levites to appoint their brethren as singers and play instruments of music. The chapter shows the organization of a musical team selected to carry His presence. The King was so excited and full of worship that he danced out of his outer robe or ephod. This form of worship was the result of doing things according to God's order.

Indeed, 1 Chronicles 15 gives an account of a joyful celebration, but let us move on to chapter 16. After the ark was brought to the City of David, King David made some changes to the musical team. Although he used some of the same men in chapter 15, he set up a permanent order among the singers and musicians. David did not want a temporary fix; he wanted constant and consistent praise around the throne and he put that in place. Specifically, verse 4 says that King David “appointed”. To appoint someone means to choose (someone) to have a particular job: to give (someone) a position or duty; to decide or establish (something) in an official way. Other words for appoint are designate, fix, name, set. King David did not do this casually. He appointed a certain type of person. He appointed seers or those prophetic in nature, to minister under the hand (authority) of King David. He chose this type because he not only wanted them to sing his songs; as we see in the book of Psalm, but he wanted them to be able to hear from God and sing the song of the Lord themselves.

Some assemblies are organized with a Board, selection committee or other group with the responsibility of appointing individuals to the music ministry. Vacancies are filled based on one’s ability to play, without knowing the character of the individual. I do not want to suggest that these methods are totally wrong. However, because of the impact a wrong selection can have on the music ministry and the congregation, I will suggest that the senior leader should be closely involved in this selection, just as King David.

I know senior leaders have so much to deal with, they may not feel they need to be engaged in these details, but again I want to urge senior leaders, musicians and singers to think differently and closely examine King David’s pattern for organizing a music ministry. No matter how small the ministry, the need for order is necessary for singers and musicians. The order may not be as complex as a large ministry (i.e., mega church), but it is essential for everyone to know their purpose and boundaries. Scripture provides thorough details for order in the music ministry. A quick study will show that responsibilities and expectations were outlined. Take a look at the following outline.

1. David Appoints Levites to Minister—1 Chronicles 16:4. They were appointed to minister before the presence of God. Typically, the title for the leadership position of the music ministry is Minister of Music, but all involved are ministers of music. They are appointed (selected) to minister before the Lord. People may come to hear or join in with singing and celebrating His presence, but ministry before the Lord is His primary focus.
2. David Appoints Leaders to Govern This New Ministry—1 Chronicles 16:5-7, 37 and 43. David governed every aspect of the nation. Although, he was a singer, song writer and musician, he was promoted and could not carry out this responsibility. He realized he could not do everything. Therefore, he appointed trusted leaders in place to carry out the responsibility of ministering before the presence of God. Because he knew what it would take to minister in this manner, he appointed

leaders to oversee this function. They were in a chief role. Just as David appointed, senior leaders, not the people, are responsible for appointing trusted leaders to govern the music ministry. To do so, leaders should know what they would like to see. David’s advantage in this regard was his musical ability, which had been developed long before he became king. This experience helped him organize and appoint the music team. Today, senior leaders may or may not know everything they want to see in the music ministry or how to get the expected results. This is where employing the help of not just a “gifted” musician/singer, but one who knows how to get the results with prayer, study of the word and wisdom.

3. Organization and Structure of the Levites—1 Chronicles 16:37; 41-42/1 Chronicles 25:1-8. After the Levites were appointed to minister, leaders were appointed from this group and other were placed under their direction. Leaders and followers alike had to know their responsibility. Scriptures indicate there was order, structure, protocol, training, schedules and other requirements in place for effective ministry. Today, all who are appointed to minister in music must understand the leadership structure, their responsibility and expectations of the ministry as seen in scripture.
4. Attire—1 Chronicles 15:27/1 Chronicles 5:12. The Levites were dressed in fine linen. So, there was a coordination of how they were supposed to look when ministering before the Lord. In every sphere of society there is a “dress code”. Try wearing shorts and flip flops to a formal restaurant and see how quickly you will be escorted out. Try going to work out of uniform, when required to wear their issued clothing and see what will happen. You may not get a warning, they will just hand you a pink slip. Why? You are representing a business by what you wear. Ministry is no different.

The issue of dress for the music ministry is a challenge for many local assemblies and for the body of Christ at large. Desiring to appeal to the younger generation, they incorporate a relaxed environment that is welcoming to all; therefore, the dress code is very informal. I concur with having a welcoming environment for all and we definitely do not want people to feel unwelcomed if they do not have the “right” clothes. However, when it comes to the music team, the rules are different. The Levites did not have the mentality of “come as you are” because they functioned under a different system than the congregation. As ministers standing before the people, we represent Christ. It is unwise for men and women that represent the Lord to wear clothing that reveal curves and private areas. For some, this is a distraction and for others, it feeds their eyes and struggle with lust. Also, the attention shifts to the individual rather than Christ. I am not advocating women wear skirts to their ankles, cotton stockings or have un-groomed appearances. I am not saying that the men must wear a suit and tie, but dressing in pants like James Brown is not appropriate when the goal is to direct the attention of the congregation to Christ. We represent the King by what we wear - just as those working for a business represents the standards of that corporation. For those wrestling over this issue, just know it is proper to have standards for dress in place. It may not be the same as another assembly, but it should be understood as a responsibility and requirement for ministry.

I strongly encourage leaders to put their expectations in writing—black and white. It was obviously in writing for the Old Testament singers and musicians because we are able to read how things were organized. Having this responsibility in writing cuts down on the confusion, strife and disorder. It helps put everyone on the same page. It also brings clarity of purpose and importance. They should be flexible and not a legalistic letter of the law where people feel condemned for breaking the rules. Rather, it will guide the ministry in a positive direction.

Further, the study of the Levites and the temple will show that leaders and Levites alike erred, made mistakes and did not always do things according to the pattern, but that did annul the pattern. Again, musicians, singers and leaders, as you study the order of David you will find a lot of things you can implement to will help the music minister and ultimately experience His glory. (See *II Chronicles 5:12-14*)

Sanctification

Definition - the process of making or becoming holy, set apart, sanctification, holiness, consecration.

Modern culture has given a pass on so much that actually defile God's singers and musicians. The instruction to sanctify and be holy is not only to senior leaders, it is to every child of God. The Old Testament priests and Levites had to sanctify themselves for service. It was a requirement. Not an option, but a command. Why? The nearness to God required cleanliness. The role of the priest and Levites was one of ministering before the Presence of God and they could not just come into His presence to carry out their responsibilities the way they wanted. It was not a ministry where you could have a Burger King mentality. Musicians and singers today are no less responsible for this lifestyle than those of the Old Testament. We are still ministering before the presence of God. This place cannot be taken lightly. It was serious then and it is serious now.

In our society, we see how music influences the minds and behavior of people. Musicians and singers, you are no doubt a leader and person of influence. You demonstrate by your life and lifestyle (how you behave) what others should do. I know many "gospel artist", praise and worship leaders, singers, etc. may not subscribe to the sanctification and consecration of the scriptures, but this expectancy comes with the responsibility. I Thessalonians 4:1-8 identifies what will defile us. Specifically, verse 7 informs us that we have been called not for the purpose of impurity, but sanctification. Romans 12:1-2 also provides instruction of how to live before God. Trust me, you and I cannot do this in our strength. We learn to live a life pleasing to God only by staying connected to Him. John 5:5, Jesus was speaking to His disciples and this also speaks to us today. He explicitly says, "I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing." (Amp)

Yielding our will and setting our hearts to obey His word is vital to being transformed.

When you step on to platform or up front, you step into another place, but thank God for grace. We have not been consumed because we are still getting it together. Some will not say anything to you about your character, thoughts and behavior, just as long as you can "perform" when needed. But, you know what is eating and gnawing at you because it is defiling you. I want to express a seriousness of the role of singers and musicians to live a life of consecration and sanctification before the Lord. A life of consecration consists of—

- 1) Studying God's Word and other Spiritual Books. If you have been a believer for 5+ years, those 30-day devotionals, although they are inspirational, should only be a snack to you. You need more spiritual food. See my suggestion below. (*II Timothy 2:15, John 17:17*)
- 2) Prayer and Fasting. We must pray without ceasing, be constantly pruned and consistently groomed. This is a process and some things are only overcome by prayer and fasting. (*Mark 9:28-29; John 15:1-3*)
- 3) Staying away from what defiles. (*Mark 7:21-23; Psalm 4:3-5; 15; 50:1-12, 17*)

These are consistent elements of consecrated life. Remember, you minister before the Lord.

It's More Than A Song Study to Show Yourself Approved Unto God!

Musicians and singers across the western world are known for not knowing the Word of God. They have a reputation for knowing the music, their instruments and recording software much more than the Word of God. Many walk out during the preaching/teaching of the word to fellowship with others disinterested in the word. This attitude toward God's word leave them skillful in their gifting, only knowing the latest religious clichés and spiritually unskillful. Let me encourage you, my fellow musician and/or singer, take time to invest in some material that will sharpen your word level so that you are not only skillful in music, but skillful in the Word of God. Below you will find a recommended reading list of books I have invested in to learn about Music Ministry God's way. Make this the year you become more skillful in the Word of God.



Recommended Reading List

- Holy Bible
- How to Study the Bible by Robert M. West
- Tabernacle of David by Keven J. Connor
- Exploring Worship by Bob Sorge
- Is Your Music Ministry or Misery by Steven Ford
- Prophet Musician by Stephen Bennett
- Order In the Courts by Paul Wilber

MUSICIAN'S & COMPENSATION

Musicians and compensation...a big issue for one ministry and for another, it is not up for discussion because it is believed "freely you have received-freely you give". In some denominations, musicians are compensated according to their skill and/or rates used by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics/Department of Labor, American Guild of Organist or what the budget allows. Let me add here that skill is not just formal training as most believe. It includes spiritual skillfulness with the musician and/or singer knowing what to minister and when. (See *II Kings 3:15*) In some denominations, the only paid musicians are the keyboardist, organist or pianist. They play the primary instrument necessary for the worship service. The other musicians (i.e., drummers, guitarist, etc.) are considered "volunteers"; therefore, unpaid or paid less than the primary musician. Some ministries find their budgets so tight they are barely making payments for the basics like utilities and other essentials necessary to keep the facility maintained. Therefore, they cannot pay anyone in the music ministry. No matter the system in place, fairness and consistency should be the rule for all within the music team.

To continue with this thought, most use the Old Testament order for the Levites to substantiate compensation for musicians. For the most part, singers are not even in the equation. It has been said that today's musicians are the "modern day" Levites and they should be given the tithe just like the Levites in the Old Testament. (See *Numbers 18:26 & Nehemiah 10:37-38*) I believed this at one time, but in my study of the Levites, I found that functioning as a musician was only one of the responsibilities of the Levites. Levites functioned as singers, gatekeepers, teachers of the law, scribes and assisted the priest. (See *I Chronicles*

24—26) The tithe was given to ALL Levites. If we look at the Old Testament function of the Levite and use that concept in our modern ministries, **everyone** serving in the temple (God's house) should receive their portion of the tithe. I also want to note that the gatekeepers of the Old Testament are similar to our ushers or greeters today. I know of no ministry that will give ushers a portion of the tithe. Do you?



In my study, I also learned that the Levites with the Priest were not employed in any other type of work outside of the charge of the tabernacle. Today, a large percentage of musicians and singers are employed outside of the church. Their compensation comes from their jobs. This is the New Testament way of the church. Remember, at the inception of the church they met in homes. As the gospel extended outside of Jerusalem, the meeting places were not the same as seen in Jerusalem for the Jews. Using the tithe law was not the order for the Gentile believers as seen in the Old Testament with the tabernacle and temple. See Acts 15 to see what happened when the Apostles discussed the Gentile believers and the law. They did not operate according to the Levitical law.

If we closely examine the distribution of the tithe in most (if not all) ministries, the tithe is not distributed according to the order of the Old Testament. We seem to have modernized the tithing laws and for

many churches—large and small— we preach tithing according to the Old Testament, but we do not distribute the tithe according to the Old Testament order, which makes paying musicians like the Old Testament Levites questionable.

Let me be clear. I am not saying musicians or singers should not be paid. Many ministries have full-time Ministers of Music/Music Pastors, singers and/or musicians on the payroll. I am saying there should be a closer review of the Old Testament order, calling only the musicians Levites and how we compensate.

If you are serving in one such ministry unable to compensate because of budget constraints and you know God has called you there, serve wholeheartedly until the Lord says otherwise. Be faithful and committed no matter what. The Lord is definitely using this season to cultivate you for the next place in His plan. I am a witness that you will be blessed for your obedience to the Lord and He will compensate you financially in ways you have never imagined. I know of many serving in the music ministry that love their church family and would not think of asking to be paid nor leave because they are not being paid. With this in mind, I admonish senior leaders to do two things 1) Keep the instruments and everything necessary for music ministry maintained and in working order. This really goes a long way in communicating you understand the importance of their function and support them and 2) Avoid the example of the musician in the earlier newsletter. Do not be deceptive— compensating one and not another or honor visiting musicians with compensation without thinking twice about those that serve faithfully week after week.

Finally, musicians and singers, my admonishment is to understand the financial state of the church. If they are barely making the budget for the things necessary for its operation, do not force the issue. If the Lord has called you to that ministry, serve faithfully, give 100% not 80% because you are not being compensated.

Jesus Christ is the Author & Finisher of My Faith
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If this newsletter has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at - **The _EPlace@yahoo.com**. I would love to hear from you. Also, this newsletter along with other writings and teachings are available at **TheEncouragementPlace.com**.