

# **Guidelines for Music Used in Worship at Sovereign Grace Baptist Church**

We are repeatedly told in the Bible to sing praise to God. If we are to do this in Spirit and in truth, we must be guided by God's Holy Word, our only rule for faith and practice. The following insights were derived from the Scriptures that we may serve the Lord acceptably with godly fear. May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself receive all the honor and glory as we prayerfully seek by His grace to put these guidelines into practice.

## **The Words**

### **1. The words we sing should be Christ-centered.**

The hymns should focus on God and His work, rather than on man and his feelings and efforts.

*"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." Exodus 15:1*

### **2. The words should be Biblical, spiritually alive, and doctrinally sound.**

*"Sing in the ways of the Lord." Psalm 138:5*

*"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Psalm 119:54*

*"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*

*"[T]hey that worship God, must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24*

### **3. The words should be understandable.**

*"Sing ye praises with understanding." Psalm 47:7*

*"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." 1 Cor. 14:15*

### **4. The words should honor the Name of God.**

*"I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high." Psalm 7:17*

*"Sing forth the honour of his name." Psalm 66:2*

**5. The words should emphasize God's sovereignty.**

*"Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth." Psalm 47:6*

**6. The words should praise God's righteousness.**

*"I will sing aloud of thy righteousness." Psalm 51:14*

**7. The words should exalt God's power, mercy, and judgment.**

*"But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning:" Psalm 59:16*

*"I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever." Psalm 89:1*

*"I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing." Psalm 101:1*

**8. The words should tell of His providential care.**

*"Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy." Psalm 59:17*

**9. The words should be in the context of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.**

*"Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him." 1 Chronicles 16:9*

*"Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs..." Ephesians 5:19*

**10. The words should be evangelistic.**

*"Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvelous works among all nations." 1 Chronicles 16:23,24*

**11. The words should express our thanksgiving.**

*"I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me." Psalm 13:6*

*"Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;" Psalm 147:7*

**12. The words should teach and admonish us.**

*"[T]eaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." Col. 3:16*

## The Music

### 1. The music we use in worship should be distinctive and separate from the world.

*"And be not conformed to this world..." Romans 12:2*

*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." I John 3:15*

### 2. The music should be joyful.

*"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands." Psalm 66:1*

*"O let the nations be glad and sing for joy." Psalm 6:4*

*"My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing praises unto thee;" Psalm 71:23*

### 3. The music should be peaceful.

*"God is not the author of confusion but of peace." 1 Cor. 14:33*

*\*\* Note that worldly music brings the peace of death by drowning out the conscience and conviction of the Holy Spirit with sheer volume and repetition.*

### 4. The music should encourage skillful musicianship.

*"[P]lay skillfully with loud noise." Psalm 33:2*

*\*\* One way to do this is to include hymns with interesting parts using counterpoint as opposed to always having parallel harmony.*

### 5. The music should be balanced.

*"Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Corinthiam 14:40*

*\*\* Just as our body and soul should be under the control of the spirit, so should the rhythm and harmony be subservient to the melody.*

*"But be filled with the Spirit...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Eph. 5:18,19*

*\*\* The music should also support the text, and not distract from it. Syncopation should only be used when the meter of the text calls for it. When syncopation is used for the sole*

*purpose of making the music more interesting, it distracts from the message. It also becomes unbalanced by putting more emphasis on the rhythm than on the melody.*

**6. The music should not be clamorous.**

*\*\*When Joshua came down from the mountain with Moses, he had a hard time telling the difference between the music used to worship the golden calf and the sound of battle.  
Reference Exodus 32:17-18*

**7. The music should not appeal to the lust of the flesh.**

*"Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." I Peter 2:11*

## **The Words and Music Together**

**1. The words and music should:**

*"[M]ake his praise glorious." Psalm 66:2*

**2. The words and music should edify.**

*"[S]eek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." 1 Cor. 14:12*

**3. The words and music should uplift the weary & discouraged heart.**

*"Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." Isaiah 52:9*

*"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear: break forth into singing and cry aloud..."  
Isaiah 54:1*

**4. The words and music should be memorizable.**

*"I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart..."  
Psalm 77:6*

*"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds." Psalm 149:5*

*"[T]his song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed:" Deut. 31:21*

*"Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day." Psalm 96:2*

*"I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." Psalm 104:33*

**5. The words and music should be pleasant to sing.**

*"[S]ing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant." Psalm 135*

**6. The words and music should not offend any believer.**

*"Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed:" 2 Cor. 6:3*

*"That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." Philippians 1:10*

**7. The words and music should be triumphant.**

*"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." Ex. 15:1*

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