

# Grace Bible Church Music Guidelines for Corporate Worship

- I. Our music should distinctly honor the LORD.** It is to be sacred, set-apart, for the glory of our Almighty, Holy, Perfect God, and Him alone.

*1 Cor 10:31 Whether therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. (See also Deut 10:21; II Sam 22:50; II Chron 20:21; Ps 7:17, 9:2, 66:2, 51:14)*

This means to us that we present music that distinctly brings honor to the Lord. It may be through songs of prayer, praise, honor or worship, testimony, thanksgiving, celebration of what He has done, calling to Christian action. They need not be only old songs, hymns, and spiritual songs, but in all cases should be sacred- that is, set apart, different from other music in that it is designed to honor the Lord God.

- II. Our objective is praising the LORD skillfully and excellently, because He deserves nothing less!**

*Psalms 33:2-4 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. (See also I Chron 6; 13:8, 15:21-22; 15:27, 16:24-31, 25:7; II Chron 34:12; Psa 59:16; Psa 66:2; Is 12:5, 44:23; Col 3:22-23)*

We welcome and encourage striving for musical excellence! One need not be a professional to present their offering of praise, in fact, we encourage musicians of all-skill levels to bring their very best! This means that at the very least, we should practice, be in tune, and know the lyrics!

- III. Our music should practice deference.** Grace Bible Church consists of members and attendees from all different walks and backgrounds and one of the draws to this congregation is that it is a place one can worship with traditional hymns in a conservative style. We strive to abide by the principles of unity in God's word.

*Eph 4:1-24 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (See also Romans 14:19; Prov 25:20; 1 Cor 14)*

This means that certain forms of music, are not edifying for this particular congregation, so we will not be using them here.

- IV. Music at GBC should present a clear message with both the lyrics and the music.** The lyrics must be in agreement with Scripture, and the music (melody, harmony and rhythm) should match the lyrics.

*1 Cor 14:8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 1 Cor 14:19,26 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue...26 How is it then, bretheren? When ye come together, everyone of you*

*hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.* (See also Num 10:19; Psa 89:15, 95:1-2, 92:1, 98:4, 137; Prov 25:20, Is 51:3,11; I Chron 15:16, Lk 7:32; 1 Cor 14:1-8; Ja 5:13)

In other words, the hymn, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty* should have the joy, and reverence, and triumph the lyrics evoke, both in style and presentation. Conversely, a gospel song such as, *I'll Fly Away* would be appropriately presented in a lively manner as it is a song of celebration!

**V. Music at GBC should encourage the congregation to worship the LORD.** If the congregation is blessed or encouraged by our music, praise the LORD! But if they are distracted by our performance, then we have failed in our mission.

*I Chron 16:23-29 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. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: He also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Glory and honour are in His presence; strength and gladness are in His place. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* (See also Psa 69:30; Is 52:9, 65:14; I Chron 16:8-10, 29; II Chron 20:21; Eph 5:18-20)

Our objective is to worship God alone. The musician should strive to bring the congregation into worship of God, rather than drawing attention to the musician or musicianship.

**VI. When at a loss for a clear answer in a particular situation, please don't hesitate to ask the Music Director, or Pastors charged with the responsibility of music direction for this congregation. We are here to serve the Lord, and by extension, you. We would be glad to review your situation and provide guidance!**

Our objective is to worship the LORD our GOD without distraction, and to provoke one another to love and good works, while doing our best to remove stumbling blocks.

# Grace Bible Church Music Evaluation Circle



# Grace Bible Church Music Policy

We recognize that God created music-a form of art which is, in some areas, subjective, and has many great and appropriate uses. There are love songs, songs of devotion, songs of praise, patriotic songs, folk songs, war songs, ballads, spirituals, hymns, instrumental songs, lyrical parodies, holiday songs and many other categories of songs. However, as a church, we believe that only a few of these categories are appropriate for corporate worship. While we do host other events that are not specifically designed around corporate worship, we choose to set aside a time on Sunday mornings specifically to worship the LORD our GOD. We do this through:

- Fellowship
- Prayer
- Songs of Praise
- Honor and Worship of God
- Testimony
- Call to Christian action
- Thanksgiving
- Celebration of what God has done
- Encouragement to fellow believers
- Scripture reading, and
- Lessons from God's word.

Knowing that music is a difficult and often divisive issue and one which this congregation holds strong opinions about, we have determined that there is no other way to define what is acceptable to this church body, than to have a subjective opinion based on Scriptural principles. We can't imagine a scenario where everyone will personally agree on this issue, so we are drawing a proverbial line in the sand with the following principles and what they mean to us. We will try to be as specific as possible.

This is in no means meant to be an instruction on what you can or cannot do in private, but rather, instruction on what and how we choose to present music in corporate worship, as a church body at Grace Bible Church. We trust the Holy Spirit will guide you in your everyday life.

**1. All music for corporate worship must be in harmony with GBC Music Guidelines and this policy (Note: For other non-worship services or events, see point 21 below).**

**2. Some of the guiding beliefs on music we have at Grace Bible Church are as follows:**

- We believe that all music for the worship of God should be sacred and reverent, not only in lyric but in style as well.
- We believe the vocalist(s) and accompanist(s) should be focused on glorifying their Father in heaven.
- We believe songs of worship should be Scripturally sound.

- We believe songs of worship should be focused on the One we are worshipping, however,
  - We believe there is a place for songs of challenge, call to Christian action, or celebration of what God has done.
  - We believe that music is also for the edifying of the body (and that in so doing, we glorify God) and that we are called to love one another even in worshipping the Lord.
  - We believe that music should be an appropriate balance of Melody, Harmony and Rhythm.
  - We believe that music that is out of balance is not good for our Mind, Body, and Spirit.
  - We believe all things should be done decently and in order.
  - We believe that God deserves nothing less than the very best we can offer Him.
  - We believe music should be excellent.
  - We believe that melodies, arrangements, and lyrics should be in harmony and not contradicting each other taking away from the intent of the text.
  - We believe we should be willing to sing/ play our special music without recognition of the musician, wanting only God to be glorified.
  - We believe we are more likely to maintain a traditional style of worship by utilizing a song leader and hymnals (for part-singing) and traditional acoustic instruments such as piano, organ, and orchestral instruments. That being said, we do welcome guitars for their use in offertories and specials!
  - We believe that, in order to maintain a sacred sound, choosing to prefer the traditional but excellent sound of acoustic orchestral instruments, piano, organ and practiced human voices, will better help us serve this congregation.
  - We believe that all worship is ultimately directed to one of three entities: God, man, or Satan. Since we are to worship God only, we can eliminate from a worship service any songs that do not explicitly bring honor, glory and praise to God, testimony to what He has done, or are otherwise worshipping God through calling sinners to repentance, calling Christians to service, or celebrating a holy day.
3. **At Grace Bible Church, we have made a concerted effort to prefer the conservative traditional, timeless hymns and gospel songs. In general, we will evaluate music as follows:**
- i. Does it meet the GBC Music Guidelines?

- ii. Is it doctrinally sound?
  - iii. Is the song self-centered or Christ-centered?
  - iv. Is the song a testimony of what the Lord has done for us?
  - v. Do the lyrics clearly define who we are singing to?
  - vi. Does it have a distinguishable melody?
  - vii. Is it Sacred and Reverent?
  - viii. Does the music and style support the lyrics?
  - ix. Is the music balanced in melody, harmony and rhythm, and free from excessive syncopation? (i.e., does the music inherently accentuate natural strong beats such as the 1 (triple meter or simple duple meter), 1&3 (simple or compound quadruple meters), 1&4 (compound duple meters).
  - x. Is the music free from an adversely repetitive, hypnotic, aggressive, rebellious, sound?
  - xi. Can it be sung by untrained singers? (for congregational songs).
  - xii. Does the performance of it draw attention to the musician or to the message?
4. **New songs, hymns and spiritual songs are encouraged** so long as they comply with these music guidelines and this policy.
5. **In all cases, we will abide by U.S. Copyright law as much as possible.** This means we will maintain our CCLI and Christian Copyright Service WorshipCast™ licenses. These allow us to project most lyrics, print them in a bulletin, make recordings for shut-ins and broadcast our livestream. Practically, this means we will not authorize or copy any recordings, arrangements, octavos, choir music or any other sheet music unless said copies are within the parameters of the CCLI or WorshipCast™ licenses, or we have obtained written permission from the publisher to do so.

#### For Those Leading Music:

6. **If you have been asked to lead the music on Sunday**, we would prefer that you let the Music Director know which songs you intend to lead no later than Monday, at 4:30pm. This gives the musicians (and yourself) time to practice. You will be expected to know the hymns you are leading. The music director has the responsibility to oversee the music at Grace Bible Church and may if necessary, suggest alternate hymn(s).
7. **We sing all the verses to a given hymn unless otherwise noted.**
8. **Song-leaders need to be backstage a minimum of 2 min. prior to 11am**, however, it would be wise to be up front 5 min. prior.
9. **It is the Song-leader's responsibility to determine the time to sing the Welcome Song.** It is important that he not get distracted with conversations or wander far away from the pulpit. The Music Director will instruct when to start the Welcome song or teach you how to gauge the time.

**For Accompanists and Song-leaders:**

10. **Accompanists, orchestra and Song-leaders must be here promptly at 9:00am** Sunday morning for service music practice and they need to be in their places or ready to begin the service **two minutes before 11am.**
11. **The Call to Worship** should be played through one time and then the song leader will begin the song on the second time through.
12. **The Pianist should be ready** and available to play both the *Welcome Song* when the greeting time is over (so keep an eye on the song-leader), and *Jesus Loves Even Me* while the children gather for the children's story.
13. **If you feel the need to practice** music before the service between 8 and 9:15am, please utilize the Fireside room. Please do not practice in the Fireside room after 9:15am as that room will be reserved for Nursing mothers. Please refrain from practice during Sunday School on the lower-level pianos as it disrupts Sunday School classes.

**For All Musicians:**

14. **Prelude music** should begin 10 min. prior to 11am (@10:50am) and continue until you are notified that there are 30 seconds left, at which time you should wrap up your prelude and turn it over to the pianist scheduled to play.
15. **Special music and Offertories must be ready for sound-check at 10:00am sharp and must be completed by 10:30am.** Offertories should not be longer than 4 min. It can be helpful to put the words up on the overhead projector, but this request must be made at least a week in advance.
16. **If you are playing Offertory or Special, you need to be at the front row,** ready to start before the Welcome Song is begun. It may be helpful to sit on the front pew, which is typically reserved for musicians, for the service duration. We realize that the welcome time is a great time of fellowship but recommend you let that fellowship be near the front on a Sunday that you are scheduled to serve!
17. **The use of pre-recorded tracks may be used only with prior approval by the Music Director.** We encourage the use of acoustic accompaniment whenever possible. In most cases, we cannot record or broadcast our worship services if a commercially available track is used. If you feel the need to use a pre-recorded track, this must be reviewed and approved at least three-weeks in advance.
18. **Special music and Offertories need to be approved** in advance by the music director. Unless you are presenting your own arrangement of a hymn out of the *Rejoice! Hymnal*, published by Majesty Music or *Great Hymns of The Faith*, published by Singspiration, a div.

of Zondervan, at least two weeks in advance, the music director will need to preview the piece as it will be presented and will need to know the following information:

1. How you intend to present to piece (instrumentation and style)
2. The name or title of the piece
3. The author
4. The composer
5. The arranger
6. The book it is published in, if applicable

We require this information and preview both to maintain a high standard of sacred music within the church and to comply with copyright laws because we record and livestream our services. A knowing violation of copyright law is stealing and carries up to a \$250,000 fine and possible jail time.

The music director may, if necessary, suggest another song for use in a worship service on the grounds that it does not meet the standards set forth here. We realize that sometimes the LORD gives a song at “the last moment.” Because of this, the Music Director may sometimes make an exception, but as a rule, we will require preview in advance.

19. **For instrumental music**, preference should be made for songs that are generally known by the congregation so that they may also worship the LORD with you. For newer songs not in our hymnal, lyrics may be displayed on the overhead. You may play a beautiful arrangement, but if no one knows the lyrics, it can be like speaking in an unknown tongue without an interpreter (1 Cor 14). Our aim is to worship the Lord and one way to do this is by edifying the congregation.
20. **For vocal music**, we strive for a style that is both traditional and natural. We encourage singing properly. This can be accomplished by singing as if talking, yet with the fullness of voice that is achieved by breathing in deeply (as if you were deeply inhaling the smell of your favorite food) and using this breath to support your voice. We encourage the kind of vocal techniques that will bring attention to the lyrics and not to ourselves. We encourage tight harmonies and part-singing (SA, SAB, SATB, TTBB, etc).
21. **For events other than a Worship Service, including outside events and any events scheduled by GBC (Arts and Crafts, Vacation Bible School, Music Nights, etc.,)** nothing written above should be construed to prevent the use of appropriate music not written specifically for worship, of various genres or styles, providing that, such songs are in harmony with 3-5 and meet the standards of 17-20 as outlined above. Such music should edify the listener, and not cause them to stumble. Special music for non-worship services must be submitted for approval by the music director for each event in advance.