

Introduction One of the most asked questions about the church of Christ is, “Why do you not use instruments in worship?”

- The result or goal of worship is not to finish on time or do it properly.

I. Why we don't use instruments in worship.

1. There is _____.

- In the Old Testament God was very specific

- Numbers 10:1-2 _____

- II Chronicles 29:35-37 _____

- I Corinthians 14:15 _____

- Ephesians 5:18-19 _____

- Colossians 3:16 _____

2. There is _____.

- The use of instruments in the Old Testament was clearly commanded and regulated

3. The proof _____.

- Historians estimate that for at least the first 1000 years of church history, Christian worship was without instruments.

- Justin Martyr – 150 AD _____

- Augustine – 353-430 AD _____

- Thomas Aquinas – 1260 AD _____

- Protestant churches – 1571 _____

II. The Glory of Singing in Worship

- Too much importance is placed on “how” we sing rather than the fact that we “only” sing in worship

- “Old Light on New Worship” – John Price

- Jesus has made singing a glorious thing in worship:

1. By His own _____

- Matthew 26:30 _____

2. By making it _____

- Colossians 3:16 _____

3. By making it _____

- Revelation 15:3 _____

Summary

- When we worship in song let us remember:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- Psalm 18:49 _____

Breakout Session

1. Divide into teams and have each group prepare a brief song service that will use both music and scripture readings to teach and/or cover one of the following:

- The Power of God's Word
- The Character/ Ministry/ Divinity of Christ
- The Majesty of God's Creation
- The Kingdom of God
- The church of Christ
- Faith and/or Trust in God
- The Lord's Supper
- The Need to Evangelize
- Salvation
- Judgment
- Praise to God
- Heaven
- Brotherly Love
- Perseverance through Trials
- The Power of the Gospel
- Forgiveness
- The Sure Promise of God
- A Subject of Your Choice

2. Each team take turns in leading the entire group in the devotional they have prepared

(10 minutes max for each).

Questions People ask about the Church of Christ

Some of the arguments offered in support of using instruments of music in the worship of the New Testament church, and responses to counter them.

Argument #1 "The Bible does not forbid its use"

Response: Worship has always been a regulated activity. From Genesis chapter 4 when Cain's offering was rejected because he, "did not do well", to Leviticus chapter 11 where Nadab and Abihu were burnt alive for failing to distinguish between the holy and the profane by offering "strange fire" for which God had not asked, to Jesus teaching that the Samaritans do not know what they worship, John 4:22, God has shown us that we do not now, nor have we ever had, the freedom to worship as we please, but rather only according to the authority of God's dictates.

Worship is for God and God alone, and therefore should be done only as He directs us and not according to our own choosing. Since instrumental music as worship is not required of us by God, it can only be offered by our own choice.

We should not be asking, "What does God forbid?" but rather "What does God require?", and in finding the answer, limit ourselves to that.

Argument #2 "Instrumental music is enjoined in the Psalms such as Psalm 98 and 150"

Response: The Psalms enjoin a great many things that would now be inappropriate under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. For example, David praised worshiping in the temple or tabernacle in his day, Psalm 5:7, and specifically in the city of Jerusalem, when Jesus said that the time was coming when Jerusalem would not be God's center of worship, John 4:21. Psalm 66: 13-15 speaks of offering burnt offerings of rams, bulls and goats. Psalm 137:9 extends a blessing to those who will dash the heads of Babylonish babies against rocks.

Obviously, not everything mentioned in the Psalms is intended for inclusion in New Testament worship.

Argument #3 "The Greek word psalmos means 'to play an instrument'"

Response: It did mean "to play" in Classical Greek, but not in Koine Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written. If psalmos did mean to play, you can be certain that the scholars who have translated the New Testament into English through the last several centuries (and other languages also for that matter) would have translated it play or at least added a footnote or something.

No major translations indicate that the word means that we are to play. Instead, it is very telling that (with no exceptions known to this writer) they all indicate singing where psalmos is used.

* Response: If anyone would have known exactly what the word psalmos meant and what practice it indicated be enjoined, the church of the first few centuries would have. History tells us that they did not use the instrument, but rather sang accapella, which of course means "in the manner of the church", which definition itself ought to enlighten us as to the original practice.

Best historical records indicate that instruments of music did not make their way into regular use in the worship of the church until after 1250AD, by which time the original church had already suffered many other changes from its original nature.

Note: We should also consider that if the word psalmos did mean "to play" then we would all be obligated to play on some stringed instrument.

Argument #4 "Adding instruments is no different than adding a church building, song books or a sound system"

Response: Actually, it is very different. When God teaches us to observe His teachings, it is implied that whatever we must do or use to keep His teachings is also authorized.

For example, He teaches us that we must meet, but since he did not tell us exactly how to meet, we are left to ourselves to find a means to facilitate meeting. We could choose to meet in a home, under a tree, in a field, in a boat, or in the usual case, in a building which we have provided for the purpose of meeting. The same principle applies to song books, sound systems and all such things. Whatever facilitates obedience to God's word is authorized as long as it does not change or add to what we are directed to do. Song books and sound systems facilitate singing without changing it from singing or adding anything different.

Argument #5 "If God gives someone a talent or a gift, it is not wrong to use that gift in worship"

Response: Does this apply to gifted plumbers, surgeons, wing-shooters and hog-callers? obviously not every gift is to be used in worship. We must not forget that God gives some gifts so that we might serve. Instrumental music can be used as a great non-worship oriented service.

"Why Don't You Have a Piano?"

1. Quick answer: We are trying to be the church Jesus established and while His New Testament does teach us to sing in worship, there is nothing there about using musical instruments.
2. Answer based on holiness in worship:
 - a. The first murder was over a failure to observe holiness in worship.
 - i. Cain killed his brother, Abel, because of jealousy over the fact that God accepted Abel's offering and not Cain's (Genesis 4:1-15).
 - ii. Abel's worship was "of faith (Hebrews 11:4).
 - iii. Based on the principle of faith coming by hearing the word of God, Romans 10:17, we can deduce that God had provided instruction concerning the sacrifice to be offered and that Abel followed that instruction while Cain did not.
 - iv. Cain had the opportunity to "do well" (Genesis 4:6-7) but chose evil instead (I John 3:11-12).
 - v. We now have the opportunity to "do well" by choosing to limit our offerings of worship to practices God has revealed to us in His Word.
 - b. Moses missed the Promised Land because of a failure to acknowledge God's holiness.
 - i. Moses failed to treat God as holy by obeying Him in the presence of Israel (Numbers 20:2-13).
 - ii. This is in spite of the fact that he acted according to instruction he had previously been given (Exodus 17:1-7).
 - iii. We can acknowledge God's holiness today by obeying Him in worship by singing as Jesus' New Testament teaches.
 - c. God killed Nadab and Abihu over a failure to distinguish between the holy and the profane (Leviticus 10:1-11, see especially 8-11).
 - i. They offered fire of their own choosing that God had not "authorized" or directed them to offer.
 - ii. We can distinguish between the holy and the profane by choosing to offer only singing in worship as we have been directed.
 - d. God used His prophet, Ezekiel to emphasize the need to make a distinction between the holy and the profane.
 - i. Judah's priests were condemned for not teaching this distinction (22:26, 44:23).

- ii. The vision he was given of the temple included a division between the holy and the profane (42:20)
- e. From the above, we should understand that when God sets something or some practice apart from other things or practices (the profane) that thing or practice becomes holy.
- 3. God's "silence" regarding instruments in the worship of the New Testament church is significant.
 - a. He was not silent concerning music in worship as singing is specified.
 - b. Even Jesus subjects Himself to "silence" regarding the priesthood.
 - i. "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reverence to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests" (Hebrews 7:14).
 - ii. God's specified choice of the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron to serve as priests automatically eliminated all other tribes and families including Judah even though Jesus was of Judah.
 - c. "Silence" is used as an understood principle on an everyday basis.
 - d. Authorizing a mechanic to change your oil does not allow him the freedom to install a new muffler as well.
 - e. Ordering bacon, pineapple and red peppers on your pizza precludes all other toppings.
 - f. A doctor's prescription for a particular medication authorized only that medication and does not need a disclaimer listing all medications not to be prescribed.
- 4. The church did not include musical instruments in the worship of the church at all until the seventh century and they did not come into regular use until the thirteenth century.
- 5. The first Christians would have been intimately familiar with the language and would have known what the words meant and would allow better than any modern scholar.