



TBC MUSIC MINISTRY

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth. Sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise!" (Ps. 66:1-2)

At Timberlake, we desire our music ministry to be God-centered, doctrinally informed, reverential, heartfelt, and joyful—with everything being done for the purpose of edification. Our music includes a blend of old and new songs in various musical styles. It is primarily congregational in nature, supplemented with specials by the choir and other gifted individuals. The presentation of music in our worship services is always about ministry, leading people to actively engage in worshipping God, and not to simply sit through a performance. The purpose of singing at Timberlake is to focus attention on God and raise affection for God.

The following document overviews our music ministry at Timberlake. Part One explains why we sing in our church services. Part Two explores the Biblical philosophy that drives all our decisions in the music ministry. Part Three provides an example of a typical progression of a Sunday morning service. Part Four describes additional guidelines for those who participate in our music ministry.

Part One: Purpose of Music

Singing has always characterized God's people, from her earliest of days. After the triumph of the Lord over Pharaoh, Israel sang of God's redemption (see Ex. 15). And at the return of Christ, accomplishing the final exodus, God's people will continue to sing (Rev. 15:3). In between, as we wait for the coming of our King, we continue to sing of him and to him.

Why are our services filled we singing? Why not simply gather on Sunday and hear preaching? A brief examination of Scripture affords us at least five answers to this question:

1. Singing to God is the natural overflow of a heart that has been forgiven and rescued by him (Ps. 103). As humans, we naturally praise what we love and value. As Christians, our highest love and most valuable possession is Christ. He died to restore us to God. He is our righteousness. We are forgiven through him. This is why we sing to him and about him. It is one expression of our devotion to him.
2. Singing in the corporate setting is also a form of mutual encouragement and instruction. It's actually *commanded* for our good by the apostle Paul (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)! When the body of Christ hears truth from its members in song, our unity is expressed, and the body is edified.
3. Singing is a form of meditation and helps us memorize truth. In Deut. 31:19-22, the Lord tells Moses to write a song for Israel that "will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring," which is subsequently recorded in chapter 32. This song was to function as a testimony *against* them when they entered the land and disobeyed their God. It was to remind them of all God had done for

them, how he would judge them, and finally, how he would restore them. Israel's hymnbook, the Psalter, also encourages this kind of meditation through song (Ps. 1; 119). Paul incorporated hymns into his letters to the churches (Col. 1:15ff.; 1 Tim. 3:16), presumably to help facilitate mediation and memorization of gospel realities.

4. Singing truth set to music positively affects our emotions, often raising our affections for God. Music has the power to evoke emotion all on its own, even apart from lyrics. But paired with *truth*, music can affect us in the most profound ways. Music can adorn the truth and raise our affections that come to full expression as we join together in singing that truth to one another and to God.
5. Singing is a gift from God and brings glory to God. Harmonies, rhythms, melodies, and instruments are all gifts from God intended to be enjoyed for his glory. The Psalter represents a variety of musical instruments and types of music, all for the pleasure of the worshipper and the glory of the Lord. The same is true today of his bride, the new man—the church!

So, to put it simply, the purpose of singing at Timberlake is to focus attention on God and raise affection for God.

Part Two: Philosophy

It is our desire that every element of our music ministry to be pleasing to Christ and governed by his word. The following Biblical qualities are our grid system that guides us as we make decisions about song choices, music team members, musical styles, service flow, etc. The Biblical qualities are:

1. Truth. What we sing to God and about God must be true and clear. Singing is an act of worship and therefore should be handled with the same integrity as a sermon. We embrace songs that teach truth both deeply and simply, as long as the lyrics are biblical. We avoid songs that are vague and open to multiple interpretations by the singer. This is because the ultimate goal in our song choices is edification through the truth (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
2. Passion. Singing truth should not be boring or lifeless. On the contrary, truth combined with fitting music will naturally alter the affections in a myriad of ways. There is a sense where our music should be truth kindled on fire in our hearts! For example, the Psalms are filled with songs that draw out our emotions including joy, contrition, celebration, longing, and reverence, just to name a few. They clapped, wept, shouted, and were moved by the music. Our singing ought to be filled with (not dependent on) emotion produced by the truth.
3. Genuineness. Singing the truth and living the truth must walk together—in fact, our singing is an expression of our love for and submission to the truth (see Ps. 119). Otherwise, our lives become compartmentalized into my “Sunday life” and “Monday-Saturday Life,” cultivating patterned hypocrisy. Instead, we desire our congregation to be constantly growing in the truths we sing, free from secret, habitual, life-dominating sins. This is especially relevant to those who lead the congregation in song, such as our pastors, music team leaders, instrumentalists, and choir members. Because they set the example of genuine praise and lead God's people to express praise, they must live lives of authentic Christ-likeness (see Matt. 7:3-5).
4. Excellence. Those who lead the times of corporate singing must pursue growth in their God-given abilities as an aspect of good stewardship. The excellence we aim for is one that is unnoticed. We desire to take away all distractions for the congregation. On the one hand, distractions could be

anything from poor preparation to sloppy execution; on the other hand, it could take the form of showing off or seeking to stand out. This kind of excellence minimizes both by being ultimately concerned for the glory of God and the good of the church.

5. Deference. In our times of singing, the attitude between members should be one of mutual deference. We each should prefer the desires and needs of the other with the goal of promoting unity (see Phil. 2). Everyone's personal preferences for musical styles definitely won't be the same, but the posture of our hearts should be willing to defer for the good of our brothers and sisters.
6. Variation. Instead of choosing one musical style exclusively, we integrate the best songs of styles deemed appropriate and most suited for congregational singing. The form (the music) must fit the content (the words). The songs must be singable by the majority of the congregation. They can be scripture songs, psalms, hymns, choruses, etc.—as long as the content is true. They can be simple or complex, old or new, long or short.
7. Participation. Singing in the assembly is primarily congregational in nature, which means we want our entire congregation to participate. Paul's commands to sing were given to the entire congregation, not merely to the band or choir! Therefore, we strive to make sure the music does not discourage participation or encourage passivity. Music exists to serve the congregation, not overpower it.
8. Purpose. Our musical sets are planned and purposed, as an application of Paul's command that everything be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). They often develop along an intentional progression of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, listening, response and sending (see Part Three below). They may sometimes center on a particular biblical theme or passage being preached. Our services are planned prayerfully and purposefully for the edification of the saints.

Part Three: Typical Progression

In most Sunday morning corporate gatherings, our order of service follows an intentional progression: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, listening to the word, response, and sending. Here is a short description of each category:

Adoration. This is the starting place for our worship. We come to adore God for who He is and what He has done. These songs include a focus on God's majesty, glory, goodness, and greatness in all of His attributes.

Confession. Once we see God for who He is in His holiness, we will see ourselves in light of our sinfulness. It is at this point that we come to God in confession and repentance of our sin. We find forgiveness in Christ as our substitute who paid the penalty for our sin on the cross. These songs include themes that center on the Gospel and the sufficiency of Christ's atonement.

Thanksgiving. Once we experience God's forgiveness and see our need of His grace, we respond with thanksgiving in our hearts, expressing untold gratitude to God for what He has done for us in Christ. God has freed us from our sin, justified us by His grace, and given us an eternal hope in Him! These songs focus on thanking God for what He has done for us and include themes of mercy, hope, spiritual blessings/provision, rejoicing, and looking to Christ's return.

Listening. The preaching of God’s Word is the highlight of the service. This is a time where we corporately engage our hearts by listening to the living truth of God’s Word in order to be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Response. Upon hearing the Word of God proclaimed, we respond by singing the truth to one another as we seek to walk in newness of life. These songs focus on devotion to God, obedience, sanctification, dependence upon God, and applying the Word to our hearts.

Sending. Once our corporate gathering has come to close, the church is now sent out into the world equipped to do the work of the ministry. We are sent to proclaim the Gospel and live out the Gospel in our homes, communities, and workplaces.

Part Four: Guidelines

Here are some practical details we’ve identified as helpful in working out these aims in our services.

GENERAL

We desire that everyone involved in our music ministry be a member of our church with a godly testimony. We also respectfully ask all musicians to be responsible in personal practice and preparation for singing/playing.

“We will try to sing, play, pray and preach in such a way that people’s attention will not be diverted from the substance by shoddy ministry nor by excessive finesse, elegance or refinement.

Natural, undistracting excellence will let the truth and beauty of God shine through.”

(Credit: John Piper, Bethlehem Baptist Church)

FLOW AND ORDER OF SERVICE

In a Biblical text giving instructions about Church gatherings, Paul writes, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Cor. 14:40)

In an effort to do this, we strive to, among other things, maintain a good flow of service and eliminate distractions from the worship of God

wherever we can. All music ministry participants are requested to be in their places and ready to begin their selections within a few seconds

following the preceding element in the service. For example, it is

appropriate to move quietly into place at the close of a preceding song or prayer in order to eliminate “dead space” between service elements.

DRESS GUIDELINES

Ladies

As a Scriptural guideline, we require modesty in all situations. Specifically, we request that female participants in Sunday services wear dresses or outfits with skirts or nice dress slacks, with modestly-cut tops and skirts that do not come above the knee when you are sitting.

Men

As a Scriptural guideline, we require modesty in all situations. Specifically, we request that male

participants in Sunday services wear dress pants and a dress shirt. Suit/sport coat and tie are optional. For a uniform appearance, we ask that male participants in groups be consistent...all members should either wear, or not wear a coat.

SPECIFICS OF VARIOUS MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

CHOIR

We love to see a full choir of God's people singing His praises! Our adult choir sings special numbers most Sunday mornings, as well as an annual Christmas cantata, Easter Sunday, and other special services. We encourage anyone interested in joining the TBC adult choir to speak with our choir director, Lori Wood. You must be a member of TBC (regular or Watchcare membership) or currently in the membership process, and at least 16 years old. Practice is held on Sunday afternoons.

INSTRUMENTAL TEAM

Our instrumental team accompanies congregational singing in Sunday morning worship services, as well as occasionally playing offertories. Anyone interested in joining our instrumental team is encouraged to speak with the Worship Leader or Worship Leader Assistant. You must be a TBC member (regular or Watchcare membership) or currently be in the membership process. In addition, there may be auditions to determine skill level. Currently, the instrumental team plays every other Sunday morning as well as special services such as Easter and Christmas. Music is emailed to the group two weeks in advance whenever possible. Group members are asked to respond with verification that you received the music, and to begin practicing it on your own before group practices. Rehearsals are held every other Saturday morning at 9:00 in the Ministry Center. Please bring your music with you to practice.

MUSIC GROUPS, SOLOISTS & INSTRUMENTALISTS

We believe that people who assist in leading the congregation to worship God should be members of our church with a public reputation of godliness. As a normal practice, the Worship Leader will select soloists and members of special groups either from the general pool of choir and instrumental team or other church members.

SONG SELECTION

Generally, special music groups and soloists select their own songs and submit them for approval to the Lead-Worshipper. The special music will usually be sung in either the offertory slot or right before the sermon. All musical selections should reflect one or more of these categories: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Response. These categories serve as a boundary for your musical selection, not as individual boxes that each musical selection must fit neatly into. Sometimes a song may overlap one or all of these categories. Our desire is for you to select songs that feature God's attributes, the cross of Christ, gratitude over what God has done, or how God's truth is lived out. All musical selections should undergo careful review to ensure that the substance of the lyrics is Scriptural and edifying. If there is any doubt as to the appropriateness of a song for our church, arrangements should be made to have it previewed by the Worship Leader prior to practicing. If you need help finding a song for a special music group or soloist, we can help provide you with options and direction.

ACCOMPANIMENT

Instrumental accompaniment for special music may be provided by various members of our instrumental team or other church musicians. Any selection that requires instrumental accompaniment needs to be submitted to your chosen accompanist *no later than two weeks prior to presentation*. If you need help in finding an accompanist, please see the Worship Leader Assistant. If you desire to use a recorded soundtrack as your accompaniment, the church may be able to purchase it. Please check with the Worship Leader Assistant before purchasing to make sure you can be reimbursed. Soundtracks bought by TBC will be property of the church.

SUBMISSION OF SPECIAL MUSIC SELECTIONS TO THE OFFICE

We request all special music groups and soloists to submit the title of their selection to the Scheduling Coordinator for review *two weeks in advance* of your scheduled date. This allows for practice time if a song selection needs to be changed. If the office does not receive the title two weeks in advance of your scheduled date, we reserve the right to postpone your selection to a later date if needed. Changes in the monthly music schedule should not be made unless first checking with the Scheduling Coordinator.