

It's NOT All About the Music

– why we use the music we use –

One of the wonders about music is that it is so intensely personal. In a church body of 1,400, there might be 1,400 personal preferences regarding music. Some people want more older songs. Some people want more newer songs. Some people want more instruments, while others want fewer instruments. Some people want louder music; others want softer music. Some people want slow, contemplative music. Some people want fast, celebrative music. Wow! There is so much diversity! What should we do?

If we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge our “likes” and “dislikes” as issues of preference, not spirituality. What music sits in your CD or mp3 player? What is loaded in mine? Answering that question will betray our preferences. People often state, “Pastor Jeremy, you get to pick all the music you like,” as a rebuttal concerning this issue of preference. However, if you ask Lori and our kids, you would find that my music preference is often **not** what we sing in our corporate worship gatherings. Would I like to exclusively use a style of music that is consistently heard from my CD or mp3 player? Yes, I would! However, exclusively using music that I “like” would not be what is best for the local body here at Grace Bible Church (or any church, for that matter).

The Bible offers amazingly little **direct** instruction for such a touchy issue in church body life. Although the concept of music/song/melody is addressed throughout the entire Bible, the only true **command** is that we are to worship God through the use of it! Psalm 66 prescribes, “**Sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious!**” The body of Christ is commanded to take part in this public display of corporate worship (the author of Hebrews establishes Jesus as our example: “**I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.**” [2:12]). In addition, there are a lot of Psalms that address using various instruments to praise and worship God (Psalm 150, for example). Also, we are called to **do well** with the music-worship we offer to our Lord (Ps. 33:3: “**Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.**”). Just like every other thing we do in life (Col. 3:17), we should sing and play for the glory of God (“in the name of the Lord Jesus”).

With all of this in mind, why do we use the music we use here at Grace Bible Church? As any person who attends consistently knows, we use a broad spectrum of music genres in our corporate worship gatherings. On any given Sunday, we will use newer music, older music, faster music, and slower music. From time to time, we may even use Southern Gospel or other multi-cultural music! Generally speaking, we try to use music that will complement the message being taught in the gathering. However, that is not always possible. Equally important, we use music that points to the cross and expresses the greatness and glory of God. The unifying theme that undergirds all the music we use is the communication of the glory and greatness of God, most clearly seen through the cross. We gather together to proclaim, and celebrate our Lord’s greatness and glory. As we testify concerning our Lord’s greatness, we may not always use music that we “like.” In such cases, we need to remember that the Lord (not us!) is the focus. In another sense, we are called to extend grace to one another through the use of music that may not minister to us but ministers to someone else. Philippians 2:3 is our pattern: “**Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**”

As we serve, fellowship, teach, and use music to proclaim our Lord’s greatness, may we be known by our gracious interaction concerning one another’s preferences. May we remember: it’s not all about us or the music we like; it’s all about our Lord’s glory and greatness!

– Pastor Jeremy