

Accountable Musicians

- By Karen Westbooks

In I Chronicles 6:31 & 25:1, 6-8, the Levites, were responsible for the preparation of music that was to be used during services. These priests also trained the younger Levites to be skillful musicians and how to serve in the ministry. The local church is experiencing a famine when it comes to trained, skilled and committed musicians. There are churches where the choir has to wonder if the musician will show up for rehearsal or be on time for service, musicians who "church hop" because a few more dollars are being offered across town, some churches are looking to secular musicians to fill the slot in ministry and other churches simply do without a musician.

God called each of us before the beginning of the world to this ministry. Once we have received Christ as our Savior, we are responsible to put that gift to use for Him. He planted a specific gift/ability in each of us as a tool to carry out the ministry and anointed

that gift with the power of the Holy Spirit, to reconcile the lost to Christ to magnify the Lord and to edify the Body of Christ. Music is a language that crosses social and cultural lines. In situations where someone will not receive the spoken Word, you are able to sing or accompany that Word with music to bring about deliverance and to soothe and soften hearts and minds to be receptive to the spoken Word. As musicians, God placed the basic gift and ability within us to compose, play or sing music. However, as in the parable of the talents, we have a responsibility to invest in the perfecting and multiplication of that gift. The more you develop the gift, the more the Holy Spirit has available in you to use. I Tim 3:15 applies to our music ministry in more than just the study of God's Word. There is nothing wrong with spending some time in private instruction or taking a community college class or two. He has given us raw talent. It is not enough to have the basic gift and not develop what God has placed in you. Do you have a good ear? Learn to read. Are you a good reader? Develop your theory

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skills which will help your ear skills. Do you only play one instrument? Expand and explore the possibilities of being proficient in more than one instrument.

We have a responsibility to train those who also have the call to music ministry and to not be selfish with our knowledge and abilities. There are many children and young people in our congregations who have the raw talent within them. Train them technically and spiritually. Lack of patience is not an excuse!! Someone had patience with you, it took patience even for you to practice and learn what you know. Teach what you know, share what you have and sow into the lives of other musicians. If we fail to do that, what we have to offer dies with us.

“Walk worthy of your calling” Eph 4:1-2...Preparation for rehearsals is essential. Choir rehearsal is not the time for the musician(s) to practice. I know that the vast majority of us (musicians) do not have the luxury of being in full time ministry. Many of us have jobs, school, family and other obligations but it is imperative that you set aside time whether it be each day or a block of time on different days to spend time in

practice. When you are prepared it will relieve much of your Sunday morning anxiety and free you to worship and praise the Lord instead of worrying about the next chord change or modulation. If you are a musician but do not select what the choir or groups will sing, make sure you contact the director before rehearsal. If you are responsible for the music selections, value the sacrifice being made by your ministry team (choir, musicians, dancers) by contacting the other musicians in advance regarding the selections to be rehearsed and structuring your rehearsals complete with moments spent in prayer and worship before work begins.

A good soldier does not enter battle untrained, with rusty armor and a dull sword nor does he prepare for battle by borrowing the equipment of other soldiers. Invest in your music collection and instrument maintenance. Purchase the CD, DVD, lead sheet or music folio. Maintain a notebook listing songs learned and new music including their keys. Purchase your instrument of choice and keep it well maintained. Although there may be janitorial staff at your church, make it your responsibility to look after the care

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and upkeep of the instruments that are available to you at the church. Are the instruments dusty? Dust them. Is a string broken on the piano? Is it in need of tuning? Is the keyboard functioning properly? Are the drum heads worn or cymbals cracked? Be aware of the protocol for instrument repair within your own church and notify the appropriate person(s).

Lastly, it is imperative that we understand that we do not entertain the people nor perform but that we minister. We pour out what God has poured into us. Corporate worship service should not be the only time we are being refreshed by God's Word nor should it be the only time we enter into His presence. Aside from a few moments spent here and there with a scripture and a prayer, we should strive to spend some extra time studying His Word, seeking Him, privately worshipping and adoring Him and hearing from Him. He has called us, He has given us the tools we need to accomplish all that He has planned for us. We have no excuse.

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