

SOME MUSIC GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH MEETINGS

(Handbook References: *Administer the Church, 2010*)

“Music is of enormous importance in our worship services. Those who choose, conduct, present, and accompany the music may influence the spirit of reverence in our meetings more than a speaker does. . . . Music can set an atmosphere of worship which invites that spirit of revelation, of testimony.” (President Boyd K. Packer, October 1991 General Conference)

Organ Prelude and Postlude Music - “An organist who has the sensitivity to quietly play prelude music from the hymnbook tempers our feelings and causes us to go over in our minds the lyrics which teach the peaceable things of the kingdom.” (President Boyd K. Packer, *ibid*)

By playing hymns, we will “draw ever closer to Him who has inspired sacred music and commanded that it be used to worship Him. . . . We should use hymns when we need spiritual strength and inspiration.” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994 General Conference)

“Generally speaking, our musicians play prelude music that is really secular or is Protestant. It is marvelous what will happen if they play the familiar hymns. . . . Powerful music and the Spirit will be invited into a meeting by the hymns of the Restoration.” (President Boyd K. Packer, General Authority Training Meeting, 3 April 1993)

Congregational Singing - “Singing our beautiful, worshipful hymns is food for our souls. Worshiping in song has the effect of spiritually unifying the participants in an attitude of reverence.” (President James E. Faust, April 1992 General Conference)

“When a congregation worships through singing, all present should participate. . . . Many have difficulty expressing worshipful feelings in words, but all can join in communicating such feelings through the inspired words of our hymns. . . . As we sing we should think about the messages of the words. Our hymns contain matchless doctrinal sermons. . . . Some of us in North America are getting neglectful in our worship, including the singing of hymns.” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994 General Conference)

“Most Church meetings are enhanced by the singing of hymns. Music provides a primary means by which members participate in Church worship services. Congregational singing has a unique and often underused power for unifying members as they worship together.” (Book 2, 14.4.3)

“Opening and closing hymns are usually sung by the congregation. . . . The sacrament hymn is always sung by the congregation. It should refer to the sacrament itself or to the sacrifice of the Savior.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.4) The First Presidency encourages “all members, whether musically inclined or not, to join with us in singing the hymns.” (Preface, *Hymns*, 1985)

We must “learn once again in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to really sing. We simply must do something with our congregational singing to bring out the spirit of music in the heart and soul of every boy, every girl, every man, every woman.” (President Thomas S. Monson, Hymnbook Celebration, Assembly Hall, 3 September 1985).

Ward Choir Music - “Choirs are encouraged to use the hymnbook as their basic resource because the hymns teach the truths of the restored gospel. Hymns arrangements and other appropriate choral works may also be used.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.5)

Special Musical Selections - “Musical selections may be presented by choirs, vocal and instrumental soloists, and small groups. Hymns and other appropriate selections may be used. . . . If musical selections other than the hymns are used, they should be in keeping with the spirit of the hymns. Texts should be doctrinally correct.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.2; 14.4.3)

Instruments - “Pianos, organs, or their electronic equivalents are the standard for use in Church meetings. If other instruments are used, their use should be in keeping with the spirit of the meeting. Instruments with a loud or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meetings. If a piano, organ, or accompanist is not available, appropriate recordings may be used for accompaniment.” (Elder Russell M. Nelson, Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, 21 June 2003; see also Handbook 2, 14.4.2)

“When there is no reasonable alternative, priesthood leaders may authorize the use of meeting-house pianos and organs for practice, paid private instruction, and recitals involving members of the units that use the meetinghouse. No admittance fee should be charged for recitals.” (2, 14.7)

LDS-Pop Music - “Some religiously oriented music presented in a popular style is not appropriate for sacrament meetings.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.2) “Some religiously oriented music in a popular style can be uplifting and motivating for some of our members, but may lack the dignity and propriety suitable for a worship service.” (Bulletin, No. 31, September 1986, page 1)

Copying Music - “If Church leaders and members desire to use materials owned by others, such as printed text, visuals or music, audio or video recordings, photographs or artwork, computer software, and electronic products, they must make certain that the copyright owner has given permission for the use of their material. *It is both illegal and dishonest to use the copyrighted works of others without their permission.*” (Council of the Twelve letter, dated 25 Feb 1995)

Music for Funerals, Baptismal Services, or Wedding Ceremonies - see Handbook 2, 18.6.5 for funerals; 20.3.4 for baptismal services; 14.9.5 for weddings.

Music in Temples - organ music should be played softly and reverently at all times; selections should be drawn from the hymns and children’s songs, as approved by the Temple Presidency.

Live Accompaniment is normally used in sacrament and other ward meetings. Music in Church meetings should usually be sung in the language of the congregation. (See Handbook 2, 14.4.2)

Maintaining Musical Instruments - “The agent bishop for each meetinghouse and the stake physical facilities representative (a high councilor) are to see that pianos and organs are tuned, maintained, and repaired as needed.” (Handbook 2, 14.9.3) *Digital instruments need no tuning!*

Proper Music Terminology - “Music director” (not chorister); “hymn” (not song).