

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MUSIC POLICY STATEMENT

PRELUDE:

There has never been a time when music has had a greater influence for good or evil than it does today. It appears that Satan has exploited music to his best advantage. In view of our changing society and the ever increasing power of music, it is the responsibility of the church to establish guidelines and standards for music used in *corporate worship*. With an ever growing variety of styles from which to choose and differing perspectives on what constitutes “appropriate” music, the issue of music in the church in modern times is one that must be addressed.

This policy sets God honoring standards for music used in our worship together. While we urge all Christians to be sensitive to the Lord’s leading and to exercise good judgment concerning their own music standards, we recognize that those issues are between the individual Christian and the Lord and are a matter of personal conviction. The purpose of this policy is *not* to define for individuals what constitutes right or wrong music as it relates to their individual worship or enjoyment. Rather, understanding that there are inevitably a variety of preferences and convictions within the church body, we seek to identify music for our *corporate worship* that is most likely to enable worship and is least likely to cause offense.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT:

While music is an important element in our worship services, there are few issues about which Christians have stronger opinions or that are as potentially divisive as that of music in the church. The purpose of the church is to glorify God in all that it does, by resisting the worldly elements of the culture in which it exists. The church must be a light in a dark place (John 8:12)

Music is an important way to bring honor and praise to God. Though it is not required for worship to take place, music can enhance worship. Music in *corporate worship* should extol God for His many attributes and blessings as well as give testimony to Him by bearing witness to what He has done in our lives (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19).

With this in mind, no music used in the church should contain elements that reflect poorly upon the character of God. This pertains to the lyrics, melody, harmony, style, rhythm, timbre and presentation.

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the responsibility of every local church to define its own standard toward music. Although every Christian may exercise Christian liberty in the types of music that they listen to at home, music that is a part of church worship must conform to what the local church defines as acceptable. The purpose of church music is to enhance worship, not to entertain or give the musician an outlet for personal expression.

The First Baptist Church family has an open but conservative, more traditional attitude toward music. It is our intent therefore to identify the types of music that bring the greatest blessing to our church family.

It is *not* our intent to impose a musical standard upon anyone in our church. Our purpose is to provide a standard for music used in our *corporate worship* that is most likely to be edifying, and least likely to be offensive to anyone. While not satisfying the personal tastes of everyone, a more conservative approach to music is most likely to achieve our objective.

Excellent Christian music will contain all of the qualities that make sacred music worshipful and spiritually edifying (as listed below) and none of the qualities that cause it to seem worldly:

1. LYRICS: That uphold and exalt the person of Jesus Christ.
2. MELODY: That creates a worshipful environment.
3. HARMONY: That supports the message and spirit of the piece.
4. RHYTHM: That is subtle, not dominant or abrasive.
5. MESSAGE: That is doctrinally correct.
6. STYLE: That is distinctively spiritual as opposed to worldly.
7. PRESENTATION/DECORUM: That is tasteful and honoring to our Lord.
8. APPROPRIATENESS: That responds to the occasion and purpose.
9. EDIFICATION: That is directed toward the hearer, and not self.
10. OBJECTIVE: That is a ministry, not a performance.

Music that is contemporary (new) is not necessarily wrong or inappropriate for *corporate worship* and music that is traditional is not necessarily appropriate for *corporate worship*. However, it is far easier to abuse contemporary music because of the inherent influence of modern style. For this reason we should, “Be very careful, then, how (we) live – not as unwise but as wise” (Eph.5:15).

POLICY STATEMENT (Continued):

Here are some principles that must be used to evaluate Christian music for our church:

1. What is the lyrical content of the song? Are the words true? Are they biblically accurate and doctrinally correct?
2. Does the way in which the lyrics are presented cheapen the message?
3. Does the song make you conscious of our Lord, and draw you to Him, or does it just appeal to the flesh?
4. Does it stimulate spiritual thought and produce a wholesome response?
5. Does the musical style come across as worldly, so that it loses its Christian character?
6. Is the lifestyle of the person ministering in music honoring to God?
7. Is the intent to focus our minds on the truth and person of God or to entertain?
8. Does the beat overpower and obliterate the message? Or is it subtle, tasteful and unobtrusive?
9. Is the instrumental selection such that the lyrics are familiar to the hearers.
10. Do the instruments being used evoke a worldly image? Are instruments played in such a way as to evoke a worldly image?

With these principles in mind, “trap sets” and music with dominant or prominent drum beats should not be used. This includes accompaniment tapes/CDs, electronic keyboard accompaniments and any other music with dominant rhythms. Music containing lyrics that are not true to the Word of God or that is presented in such a way that it puts the focus on the musician and not on God should not be used.

We should be using the gifts and abilities that God gave us, including music, to achieve the “common goal” (Romans.14:1-23; 1 Corinthians. 12:7; 14:26; Ephesians. 4:11-16). Sensitivity to other believer’s tastes, preferences, convictions, culture and weaknesses is a sign of maturity. The exercise of Christian liberty should not take precedence over the welfare of the larger community. We must not allow music to become a divisive issue in the body.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians. 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.” At the very least, it must be admitted that music is a window to the mind and soul, and therefore must minister in a way that is described in Philippians. 4:8. In the final analysis we will be held accountable to God as to whether we achieve this objective.

Dress Guidelines For Those Who Minister in Music at First Baptist Church

- These guidelines include:
Soloists, Groups, Instrumentalists, and Accompanists.
- Purpose statement:
Music that is sung and played on the platform of the church should always be to praise and glorify God, to edify or build up the believers, and to aid in evangelism.

GUIDELINES

Women:

- Dresses: please wear dresses or skirts knee-length or longer. Slits should not come above the knee. Dresses should be loose fitting-not form fitting.
- Tops and Blouses: no sleeveless tops or dresses. MODEST necklines.
- No pants or slacks.

Orchestra/Instrumental:

- When on the platform seated: Long, floor length dresses or skirts.
- On the main floor (orchestra pit): modest, loose-fitting dress slacks may be worn.
- No Jeans.

Men:

- Soloist: suit coat and tie (or turtleneck).
- If ministering in a group, orchestra included: collared shirt, slacks or khaki pants.
- No jeans.

May God grant us wisdom to select music that glorifies Him, humility to sing and play without pride, compassion to care about the needs of people, and illumination to understand the truths that we sing and play. Praise God for giving you the opportunity, ability, and responsibility to be involved in such an important ministry. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:19,20)

Membership Requirements
for Music Ministry of First Baptist Church

Special Music: Member of First Baptist Church or child of a member.

Pianist/Accompanist: Member of First Baptist Church or child of a member.

Adult Choir: High School (9th Grade) - Adult. Member of First Baptist Church or child of a member.

Orchestra: 8th Grade - Adult. Member of First Baptist Church or child of a member.

Children's Choir / Orchestra: Regular attender of First Baptist Church. The director must be a Member of First Baptist Church.

Other outside groups or vocalists will be allowed only by special arrangements by the Pastoral Staff of First Baptist Church.