

The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,
holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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Church Choirs

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The New Testament instructs us to sing. Just as God specified that “gopher” was the wood He desired for the ark (Gen. 6:14), He specified that “singing” was the music He desired for the church (Col. 3:16). This excludes every other kind of music.

The singing of the church should be congregational. It is to be a reciprocal action, meaning that everyone participates in the song service. Paul wrote:

“Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19, ASV).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16, ASV).

The terms “one to another” (heautois) and “one another” (heautou) are grammatically classified as reciprocal pronouns. They represent an interchange of action.

Uninspired sources also indicate that singing should involve the whole congregation. Note the following quotes: “In the early church, the whole congregation joined in the singing” (The Ancient Church, pp. 193, 423). “The prevailing mode of singing during the first three centuries was congregational. The whole congregation united their voices in the sacred song of praise” (Ancient Christianity Exemplified, pp. 329, 330). Eusebius, an early church father, declared that the churches congregational singing was so loud that it could be heard by those standing outside!

The Corinth Argument:

I have heard some brethren argue that the church at Corinth had a choir or special singing group (1 Cor. 14:26). If that is not an assumption, what is it? I wonder if they would take the same approach to other passages, like the “feasts of charity” in Jude 12? Could one not argue in favor of church sponsored meals on the same grounds? Both are mere assumptions.

There are two important things to remember about 1 Corinthians 14:26:

(1) The assembly under discussion was a special circumstance involving miraculous spiritual gifts.

(2) It does not mention singing. A psalm can be read or quoted, just as easy as it can be sung.

Appropriate Questions:

What passage authorizes the church to have a choir or special singing group? Is there such a passage? (Scripture?) Who is selected for the special singing groups? Those who have the most talent singing? If so, is that fair to the other members? (Scripture?) Who is in charge of selecting the singers? Is it the responsibility of the elders or someone else? (Scripture?) Will the group perform in front of the congregation? If so, can women participate in the group? (Scripture?) Is this not engaging in worship by proxy? If the church can employ a special group to sing for others, can it employ a special group to commune for others too? If not, why not? (Scripture?)

In order to please God, we must have authority (Matt. 7:21-23; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Jn. 9). The New Testament only authorizes congregational singing!

SIX FREE GIFTS

MAX TARBET

- 1. The gift of praise.** Mark Twain said he could live for two months on one compliment. Critics destroy. Encouragers build up. Make it a point to give several compliments daily. They are free.
- 2. The gift of understanding.** Down deep--this is really what most of us wish--to be understood. To be accepted with unconditional love. Give a compassionate response to one hurting.
- 3. The gift of concession.** Give in...give up...give out. You can win by not winning. You don't have to win all the time.
- 4. The gift of gratitude.** "Where are the nine?" Jesus asked. "Gratitude is the mother virtue of all virtues." Gratitude causes humility. Look for someone to thank. One must receive before one can truly give. Gratitude is the same root word for grace. We receive grace with gratis.
- 5. The gift of attention.** Wives, children, employees seek human dignity. They do matter. They deserve both our time and our attention. To give someone your time, respect, and attention is one of the greatest gifts. These gifts are free.
- 6. The gift of personal presence.** Spital visitation is so simple..."show up and shut up." Your presence will never be forgotten. Eighty percent of success comes with merely "showing up." Broken hearts come when you don't. Your greatest power is you, your presence. Give it.