

WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC #11

SINCE GOD COMMANDS US TO USE OUR TALENTS, WE CAN USE THEM IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

Some think this sounds reasonable enough. How could it possibly be wrong to give God praise by using the talents He has given us? Since some have a talent to play an instrument, they should be able to use it in worship — so goes the argument.

This so-called “reasoning” is really absurd when followed to its logical conclusion. For example, some have a talent to cook like those in Acts 6:1. If God desires we use our talents in worship, could these people bring their pots and pans and display their cooking skills in worship? A man may have the talent to make tents like Paul (Acts 18:3). Should he bring his cloth of goat’s hair or linen and use his talent in worship? One may be an excellent seamstress and make coats and garments like Dorcas (Acts 9:36-39). But worship is not the time for having a sewing class or quilting party.

The worship of the church is not a marketplace to demonstrate or display our talents and wares.

The Bible certainly teaches we are to use our talents (Matt. 25:14-30). But we must only do “in worship” what the Bible authorizes to be done in worship. There is authority to **preach** the word of God (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2), **pray** to the Father in Jesus’ name (Matt. 6:9; John 16:23), **give an offering** of our earnings

(1 Cor. 16:1-2), observe the **Lord’s supper** on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and **sing** psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). We ought to use whatever abilities we have in all these areas in Scriptural worship.

According to Revelation 22:18-19, we cannot “add to” or “take from” God’s Word in anything — including worship. To add mechanical instruments of music to the worship of the church is adding to God’s word, no matter how talented we are or the best intentions we may have.

The proper place to use our talents is in “Christian service.” A good cook may use their talent by preparing food for those who are unable to prepare it for themselves. A “tentmaker” (builder) can use their talent in helping elderly members and others with repairs and work around the home. A seamstress could make clothes for the needy.

Second Timothy 2:15 demands we “*rightly divide the word of truth.*” That is, we are to dig deep to understand the sacred Scriptures and not twist them around to suit ourselves to do what we want (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). To misapply one’s talent of playing an instrument of music to accompany the singing of “*psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*” is to do so without any Bible authority — whether in worship or not.

Let’s follow what God authorizes in the Bible and do what He commands — nothing more and nothing less — pointing to book, chapter and verse.

—Garland M. Robinson