

# **The Musician and the Church**

By Don Potter

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The relationship between the gifted musician and the church is often one of tension and misunderstanding. However, worship is central to church life, and this relationship can have a major impact on the entire church, for good or bad. Therefore, church leaders need to understand the unique traps that the enemy lays to ensnare musicians, in order to help them avoid these, while at the same time, protecting the worship atmosphere of the church.

## **Musicians That Use The Church**

When I speak of a gifted musician, I mean someone who God has anointed to play an instrument in an attitude of worship. This is not easily discerned because it is often not easy to discern the difference between talent and the anointing. An anointed musician will usually also be talented, but not all talented musicians are anointed. When someone's talent enables them to take a position that should be reserved for someone who is anointed and commissioned by the Holy Spirit, they will often be in a place that their character cannot sustain.

Just being able to play an instrument does not qualify anyone to lead worship, or even be a part of a worship team. To lead worship is to be in a place of bringing others into the presence of the Lord. This can be one of the most rewarding ministries in the church, but it can also be a dangerous one. One must have a strong, stable spiritual life to be able to handle the weight of this responsibility. Without that depth of spiritual life, musicians will be tempted to use the church for their own selfish gain. Musicians are especially subject to the desire for fame, which is a way that a musician's talent is usually measured. Fame is, therefore, a way that they know they have achieved, or been accepted.

This is not to say that it is right, but it is a fact. Other professions may measure success in other ways, but a musician's success is usually measured by acclaim. It is, therefore, always a temptation for a musician to seek some sort of approval for himself while he is leading worship. This can in fact put them in the place of seeking the attention that should only be upon the Lord. Is this not the trap that Satan himself fell into?

For this reason, we must learn to discern the difference between talent and the anointing, and place only those who are anointed and chosen by God, in this potentially dangerous position. This can be an even more dangerous place for the not-so-talented performers who could not make it in the world, because they are often even more tempted to use the church to fulfill their desire for audience approval and acceptance.

This may sound too difficult, or even hopeless, to a pastor who desires a healthy worship life for his church. Even so, the most important and responsible positions in life are usually very difficult to attain, and because worship is such a crucial aspect of a thriving church life, it is meant to be difficult in order to eliminate the pretenders to this crucial ministry. Quality cannot be compromised in any position that is going to have an impact on God's own children.

Let me offer a few suggestions to the leadership in charge of music that I have learned from my own experiences.

1. Move slowly with any one that is too anxious to be on the worship team. See if they are willing to serve the church by interceding for the music people for a period of time.
2. Don't be so sure a bigger band, or vocal team, is better.
3. Be sure that each person you are considering has a good family life, as being involved with the worship team can be hard on the family of one who has a call from God, and devastating to the family of those who have presumed this position.
4. Watch for signs of wrong motives with those who seem to willing to sacrifice everything to be there on Sunday. Some have a greater need to perform than to serve God.
5. If you have an anointed worship leader, have him or her also disciple someone else for that job. This keeps the church from being overly dependent on one person, and will give both time off from the pressure of leadership so that they can just seek God and enjoy worship from the other perspective.
6. Get to know the worship leader of your church well, and the other members of the worship team as much as you can. The very nature of the music business can force musicians to be good actors. They can be suffering great pain and not show it unless you stay very close to them.
7. Give the worship leader and team members plenty of feedback. Most want desperately to please, and if they get the right kind of approval from you they will be less tempted to seek the wrong kind.

Music properly channeled in worship has the power to liberate people and bring us into the presence of God. Whenever there is an area that has great potential to bless, there will be precarious seas through which we have to navigate in order to obtain that blessing. While this is not an all-inclusive list, these guidelines can help to steer church leadership through some of the turbulent waters surrounding music ministry in the church. We are in great need of the music ministries in our midst and we must see them restored to their proper place.