

MUSIC MINISTRY

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

The rich heritage of music has been recorded for us from ancient times. Both voices and instruments were used to express the full range of human emotions. Even the brief glimpses we have of what takes place in the heavenly courts often include a description of the music there.

And when God gathers His children around His throne they hold harps and sing “the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb” (Rev. 15:3).

“The history of the songs of the Bible is full of suggestions as to the uses and benefits of music and song. Music is often perverted to serve purposes of evil, and it thus becomes one of the most alluring agencies of temptation. But, rightly employed, it is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the soul . . . As our Redeemer leads us to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the glory of God, we may catch the themes of praise and thanksgiving from the heavenly choir round about the throne; and as the echo of the angels’ song is awakened in our earthly homes, hearts will be drawn closer to the heavenly singers. Heaven’s communion begins on earth. We learn here the keynote of its praise.” (Ellen G. White, *Education*, pages 167-168.)

Music can convey our thanks to God. “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song” (Psalm 28:7).

Music can be joyful. “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song” (Psalm 95:1, 2). “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs” (Psalm 100:1, 2).

Music can be praise to the Lord. “The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang . . .” (II Chron. 5:13).

Music can be a prayer for forgiveness or a petition for help when trials threaten to overwhelm. It can be a medium to weld a diverse group of people into one accord. “When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:30).

Duties of the Minister of Music

The duties of the minister of music include the following:

1. *Serve as music committee chairperson.* If your church does not currently have a music committee, now is a good time to establish one. This committee can assist you in finding talent and scheduling musicians for the worship service. This group can also work creatively with you to develop ideas for expanding your existing music program. The group should consist of at least the following members: minister of music (who serves as chairperson), head organist and/or pianist, pastor, two members at large (preferably one younger person and one older person). Depending on the size of your congregation, you can add other individuals contribute to the music program.
2. *Schedule musicians for the worship service.* You will need to arrange for an organist and/or pianist and special music for the worship service each week. This will require some planning every week and should be scheduled three to four weeks in advance with a follow-up call to the musicians one week prior to the service.
3. *Get music information into the church bulletin.* Once you have made these arrangements, contact the church secretary or bulletin typist with the musicians’ names and the selection to be presented.

4. *Serve on the worship committee.* Your responsibility on this committee is to ensure that the musical considerations in the worship service are addressed. If you have ideas for using music more effectively or for expanding the music in the service, this committee can discuss and implement your ideas.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

Discipling Music Ministry: 21st Century Directions, Calvin M. Johansson, Hendrickson Publishers.

Jubilate II, Church Music in Worship and Renewal, Donald P. Hustad, Hope Publishing Company.

Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint, Calvin M. Johansson, Hendrickson Publishers.

Music of Heaven, by John Thurber. The author, a member of the King's Heralds Quartet, explores what heavenly music is according to Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Our Heritage of Hymns, Bernard Seton, Andrews University Press.

Sing a New Song: Worship Renewal for Adults Today, C. Raymond Holmes, Andrews University Press.

Survey of Christian Hymnody, English and American Hymns, William Reynolds and Milburn Price, Hope Publishing Company.

The Hymn Society has a large selection of books pertaining to music and worship. You can request a catalog and order directly from the Hymn Society Book Service, PO Box 30854, Texas Christian University, Forth Worth, TX 76129.

The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal is available on CD.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.