

from the pulpit unless permission be granted from the conference/mission/field office. It is the duty of every elder, minister, and conference/mission/field president to see that this rule is carried out. (See pp. 147, 150, 215-217.)

Place of Music in Worship

Place of Music in Worship—“Music can be a great power for good, yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 71.

Sing With the Spirit and the Understanding—“In their efforts to reach the people, the Lord’s messengers are not to follow the ways of the world. In the meetings that are held, they are not to depend on worldly singers and theatrical display to awaken an interest. How can those who have no interest in the word of God, who have never read His word with a sincere desire to understand its truths, be expected to sing with the spirit and the understanding? How can their hearts be in harmony with the words of sacred song? How can the heavenly choir join in music that is only a form? . . .

“In the meetings held let a number be chosen to take part in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted, for it is the praise of God in song.

“The singing is not always to be done by a few. As often as possible, let the entire congregation join.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 143, 144.

Selecting Choir Leaders—Great care should be used in selecting the choir leaders or those who have charge of the music in the services of the church. Only those who are known to be thoroughly consecrated should be chosen for this part of the church work. Untold harm may be done by selecting unconsecrated leaders. Those lacking in judgment as to the selection of proper and appropriate music for divine worship should not be chosen. Secular music or that of a doubtful or questionable nature should never be introduced into our services.

Choir leaders should work in close collaboration with the pastor or church elder in order that the special musical selections harmonize with the theme of the sermon. The choir leader is under the direction of the pastor or elders of the church and does not work independently of them. The choir leader should counsel with them, not only as to the music to be rendered, but also concerning the selection of singers and musicians. The choir leader is not an ex officio member of the church board.

Providers of Church Music—Sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church needs to exercise care in the selecting of choir members and other musicians who will rightly represent the principles of the church. Choir members and other musicians occupy a conspicuous place in the services of the church. Their musical ability is only one of the qualifications they should have. It is preferable that they be members of the church, or the Sabbath School, or the Adventist Youth Society, and in their personal appearance and manner of dress set an example in modesty and decorum. Consecrated individuals with exemplary characters, appropriately attired, provide a positive influence when involved in the musical features of the services. Any plan concerning the wearing of choir robes is optional on the part of the church.

Churches may choose to have multiple choirs. The organization of children's choirs is to be encouraged as an effective means of spiritual nurture, bonding to the church family, and outreach.

Sabbath Services

Sabbath School—The Sabbath School has rightly been called the church at study. It is one of the most important services held in connection with our church work. Sabbath by Sabbath the greater part of our membership and thousands of interested friends meet in Sabbath School to study God's Word systematically. All members of the church should be encouraged to attend Sabbath School and also to bring visitors. Each Sabbath School should endeavor to provide appropriate age-level programs for everyone. Materials and resources have been developed to assist in this important task and are available from the field/mission/conference/union/division. The usual length of time for holding this service is one hour and ten minutes. This, however, does not prevent any local field from adopting a longer or shorter period if it is so desired. In arranging the program, care should be taken to provide at least thirty minutes for the Bible study.

Worship Service—The Sabbath worship service is the most important of all the meetings of the church. Here the members gather week by week to unite in worshipping God in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving, to hear the Word of God, to gather strength and grace to fight the battles of life, and to learn God’s will for them in soul-winning service. Reverence, simplicity, and promptness should characterize the whole service.

Sacredness of the Sabbath Worship Hour—The worship of God is the highest, holiest experience possible to humans, and the greatest care should be exercised in planning for this service.

“Is it not your duty to put some skill and study and planning into the matter of conducting religious meetings—how they shall be conducted so as to do the greatest amount of good, and leave the very best impression upon all who attend?”—Ellen. G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Apr. 14, 1885, p. 225.

“Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. . . . Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. . . . As we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. ‘Whoso offereth praise glorifieth’ God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with ‘thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.’ Isaiah 51:3.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 103, 104.

Form of Service—The Sabbath morning service has two main divisions: the congregational response in praise and adoration, expressed in song, prayer, and gifts, and the message from the Word of God. (See Notes, #1, p. 95.)

We do not prescribe a set form or order for public worship. A short order of service is usually better suited to the real spirit of worship. Long preliminaries should be avoided. The opening exercises should not, under any circumstances, consume time required for worship and for the preaching of the Word of God. (For suggested forms of service, see Notes, #2, p. 96.)

Announcements—Thoughtful consideration should be given to the length and character of the announcements during the Sabbath service. If they deal with matters not specifically related to Sabbath worship or the work of the church, ministers and church officers should be careful to exclude them, maintaining even in this respect a proper spirit of worship and Sabbath observance. Many of our larger churches issue printed

bulletins giving the order of service and also the announcements for the week. Where this is done, there is little or no need for oral announcements. Where no such printed provision is made, many churches find it desirable to make the announcements before the actual service begins. (See Notes, #2, p. 96.)

Proper consideration must also be given to the various departments of the church for the promotion of the interests for which they are responsible, but great care should be exercised when making appointments for their presentations, to safeguard the time needed for preaching the message from the Word of God.

Public Prayer—“Christ impressed upon His disciples the idea that their prayers should be short, expressing just what they wanted, and no more. . . . One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 581.

“When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 201.

“Let those who pray and those who speak pronounce their words properly and speak in clear, distinct, even tones. Prayer, if properly offered, is a power for good. It is one of the means used by the Lord to communicate to the people the precious treasures of truth. But prayer is not what it should be, because of the defective voices of those who utter it. Satan rejoices when the prayers offered to God are almost inaudible. Let God’s people learn how to speak and pray in a way that will properly represent the great truths they possess. Let the testimonies borne and the prayers offered be clear and distinct. Thus God will be glorified.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 382.

Communion Service

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter. The service includes the ordinance of foot-washing and the Lord’s Supper. It should be a most sacred and joyous occasion to the congregation, as well as to the minister or elder. Conducting the communion service is undoubtedly one of the most sacred duties that a minister or elder is called upon to perform. Jesus, the great Redeemer of this world, is holy. The angels declare: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Therefore, since Jesus is holy, the symbols that represent His body and His blood are also holy. Since the Lord Himself selected the deeply meaningful symbols of the unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine and used the simplest of means for washing the disciples’ feet, there should be great reluctance to introduce alternative symbols and