



Historically Grounded

For hundreds of years after the church was established on the day of Pentecost God's people did not use instruments to worship. At one point in history church worship music was so closely tied with purely vocal arrangements that there was a phrase for it in Italian: "alla capella." "Alla cappella" meant "in the manner of the chapel," and this is where our current English word "a capella" comes from. Our English word still refers to music sung without instrumental accompaniment, but we've generally lost the idea that a capella music is associated with worshipping God in song. While it may seem odd for a modern congregation not to use instruments in worship, such congregations are actually in line with the church's historical understanding of worship music.

Haven't we moved past that?

"Yes," you might argue, "but since churches have now evolved beyond singing a capella, aren't you behind the times?" It may not currently be in vogue to sing without instruments, but as a congregation that looks to the Bible to establish its practices we believe the current historical trend toward instrumental worship ultimately fails to align with biblical practice, which leads to our next section.

Scriptural Authorization

As far as the Bible is concerned the New Testament scriptures are silent concerning whether or not the church is supposed to use instruments in worship. In other words, the issue of whether or not to use instruments during worship is never addressed. Even though there are clear references to instrumental accompaniment in the Old Testament, we do not consider the worship practices of the Jewish people under the Law of Moses to be authoritative for church practice.

If the Old Testament were authoritative in dictating worship for the church of the New Testament, then we would also be compelled to keep the entire Law of Moses (Gal. 5:3) including the animal sacrifices and festivals. Since the Old Testament has been fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 5:17), the Old Testament practices are no longer binding.

Therefore, we look to the church of the New Testament as our example for worship. What we find in the New Testament is what dictates our stance on instruments. Since the issue of worshipping with instruments is not addressed in the New Testament, we believe that it is unwise to take liberties with instruments in our worship.

We encourage you to think about this subject with us and invite discussion. We are confident in our conclusion on this issue, but always open to discussing biblical issues as we seek to grow in Christ in all aspects of our lives and worship.

Focus on Meaning

We believe that there is greater potential for praise through song without instruments. What separates humans from animals is that we are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). One of the ways we reflect our Creator is through the use of language. While animals are able to communicate, they have nothing close to the sophisticated language of humans. Some of the greatest people throughout history have used language to inspire others and express truth.

Poetry is the highest form of human language. Poetry expresses truth and praise in a way that normal language cannot. The highest form of expressing poetry comes through song. Songs are sung poems that unite one of our greatest heavenly attributes (language) with our physical body. It's through singing the lyrics of a song that our bodies, hearts, and minds come together for praise. While this argument may not preclude instruments, it still illustrates the special value that a capella music places on words.

The apostle Paul says "*I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also*" (1 Cor. 14:15). The greatest way we can express gratitude, praise, sorrow, or prayers is through consciously using language with our entire being.

Contact Us

North Courtenay Church of Christ
2455 N Courtenay Pkwy
Merritt Island, FL 32953

(321) 452-8822
ncourtenay@gmail.com

Visit us on the web:
www.ncourtenaychurchofchrist.com