

## **APPROPRIATE ORGAN MUSIC IN LDS WORSHIP SERVICES** (Primary Source - 2010 Handbook 2: Administering the Church)

Appropriate organ music in LDS worship services will enhance the spirit of reverent worship. “The bishopric selects subjects for talks and music in sacrament meetings. Talks and music should focus on gospel subjects that help members build faith and testimony. . . . All talks and music should be in harmony with the sacred nature of the sacrament.” (Handbook 2, 18.2.2)

“The bishopric approves music for sacrament meetings. Music and musical texts are to be sacred, dignified, and otherwise suitable for sacrament meeting. Music in sacrament meeting is for worship, not for a performance that draws attention to itself.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.4)

### **Guidelines for Choosing Appropriate Music for Church Worship Services**

“The hymns are the basic music for worship services and are standard for all congregational singing. In addition, other appropriate selections may be used for prelude and postlude music, choir music, and special musical presentations. If musical selections other than the hymns are used, they should be in keeping with the spirit of the hymns. Texts should be doctrinally correct.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.2)

“Secular music should not replace sacred music in Sunday meetings. Some religiously oriented music presented in a popular style is not appropriate for sacrament meetings. Also, much sacred music that is suitable for concerts and recitals is not appropriate for a Latter-day Saint worship service.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.2)

Sacred music should include the basic elements of a prayer (see D&C 25:12), containing a devotional quality and a reverential mood. Without these attributes, sacred music will generally not support a meaningful worship experience.

Appropriate music also includes our sacred Primary children’s songs. They teach the gospel in the simplest manner, and they will inspire a spirit of reverence because adults and children alike love them.

“Organs and pianos, or their electronic equivalents, are the standard instruments used in Church meetings. If other instruments are used, their use should be in keeping with the spirit of the meeting. Instruments with a prominent or less worshipful sound, such as most brass and percussion, are not appropriate for sacrament meeting.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.2)

### **Organ Prelude and Postlude Music**

“Quiet prelude and postlude music creates an atmosphere of worship that invites the Spirit into Church meetings. The organist and pianist usually plays hymns or other appropriate music for five to ten minutes before and after a meeting. Playing hymns can help members review gospel teachings in their minds.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.3)

“An organist who has the sensitivity to quietly play prelude music from the hymnbook tempers our feelings and causes us to go over in our minds the lyrics which teach the peaceable things of the kingdom.” (President Boyd K. Packer, October 1991 General Conference)

“A hymnbook’s hymn is often the most inspiring and appropriate selection. . . . Our hymns have been chosen because they have been proven effective to invite the Spirit of the Lord. . . . Our sacred music prepares us to be taught the truths of the gospel. . . . Sacred music has a unique capacity to communicate our feelings of love for the Lord.” (Dallin H. Oaks, Oct 1994 G Conf)

By playing hymns, we will “draw ever closer to Him who has inspired sacred music and commanded that it be used to worship Him. . . . We should use hymns when we need spiritual strength and inspiration.” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994 General Conference)

“Generally speaking, our musicians play prelude music that is really secular or is Protestant. It is marvelous what will happen if they play the familiar hymns. . . . Powerful music and the Spirit will be invited into a meeting by the hymns of the Restoration.” (President Boyd K. Packer, General Authority Training Meeting, 3 April 1993)

“The prelude is a call to worship, an invitation to approach our Father in Heaven and to commune with Him through the Holy Spirit. The prelude should create an atmosphere in which communication with the Lord can readily take place, clearing the mind of worldly thoughts and inviting spiritual contemplation. It aids worship and is a background for quiet meditation.” (Guidebook for Organists, 1969, page 6)

### **Congregational Singing**

“Most Church meetings are enhanced by the singing of hymns. Music provides a primary means by which members participate in Church worship services. Congregational singing has a unique and often underused power for unifying members as they worship together.” (Book 2, 14.4.3)

“Opening and closing hymns are usually sung by the congregation. . . . The sacrament hymn is always sung by the congregation. It should refer to the sacrament itself or to the sacrifice of the Savior.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.4) The First Presidency encourages “all members, whether musically inclined or not, to join with us in singing the hymns.” (Preface, *Hymns*, 1985)

### **Ward Choir Music**

“Church choirs are encouraged to use the hymnbook as their basic resource because the hymns teach the truths of the restored gospel. Hymn arrangements and other appropriate choral works may also be used.” (Handbook 2, 14.4.5)

### **Special Musical Presentations**

“Musical selections may be presented by choirs, vocal and instrumental soloists, and small groups. Hymns and other appropriate selections may be used.” (14.4.3) “If musical selections other than the hymns are used, they should be in keeping with the spirit of the hymns.” (14.4.2)