

Praise Teams

By Ron Boatwright

The "praise team" is one of the sinful innovations that some of the congregations of the Lord's church have copied from the denominations. Whenever the denominations come up with new innovations, some congregations of the churches of Christ are only one step behind them and are anxious to try anything they do. It does not matter if it is not scriptural. Just as the children of Israel in Samuel's day wanted to be "like all the nations" around them (1 Samuel 8:5) with their sinful practices, today many congregations of the Lord's church also want to be like all the denominations around them with their sinful practices.

Praise teams usually start in a congregation by miking certain people, including women, in the audience who have "great voices". After the congregation has become accustomed to this, then the praise team is moved to the stage in front of the audience where they perform. The congregation ceases to worship God, and are now being entertained by a choir. The worship service has now been changed to a performance and God is no longer being worshipped.

The whole congregation is to worship God with their singing. Every Christian is commanded, "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). Also we read in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Here we see that all Christians are to speak, teach, and admonish one another as we worship God in our singing.

With praise teams, women with the aid of microphones are taking part in leading the singing. Here we have women taking a leading role over man. This is forbidden in God's word, "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:12-13). Does it really matter if God's word does "not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" in the worship service? Apparently not, because some have chosen to ignore what God says and to do things their way. This is sinful and blatant disobedience of God. This disrespect will cause people to lose their souls in eternity.

Concerning our worship, Jesus says, "God is Spirit and those who worship Him **must** worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The word "must" is an imperative, which expresses compelling authority and absolute necessity. The only way that our worship will be acceptable to God is if it is "in spirit and in truth". How do we worship God in truth? Jesus says to God in His prayer in John 17:17, "Your word is truth". So to worship God in truth, we "**must**" worship Him according to His word. One cannot worship God with a "praise team" and worship Him in truth.

The Bible says, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). Everything we do in worship to God is to be done "in the name of the Lord" which means by His authority. But where in the New Testament can you find the authority that a congregation is to be entertained by the performance of a praise team choir and with women taking a leading role over man. There is no authority for this since it came from man and not from God. Jesus says, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). When our worship becomes vain, it becomes useless and we will lose our souls as a result. Let's not lose our souls by following the denominations in their sinful practices.