A Harmonious Marriage:

Music & Ministry

Today’s Top Pastor’s and Musicians share their trade secrets!

Every Sunday, in churches across America, praise teams, choirs and musicians usher millions of people into worship and praise using a singular tool-Music.

These insights will help countless pastors and musicians understand and hopefully appreciate more fully, the dynamic partnership between pastors and musicians that successful churches witness weekly.

An efficacious music ministry is absolutely critical to the mission of the church, particularly when you take worship seriously.

As both the book of Worship (Psalms), and The book of Victory (Revelation) clearly indicate, effective musicians and music are integral to an authentic worship experience.

Several aspects necessary to facilitating good working relations between the pastor and minister of music.

“The pastor can make the minister of music’s assignment easier by:

1. Making certain the minister understand the vision and goals of the worship experience.

2. Providing the minister of music with the authority and power to implement the assignment

3. Evaluating and rewarding the minister fairly and systematically

You must be knowledgeable about your craft, be accessible and humble, and have a servant’s heart. As a minister of music, you need to understand that the pastor has been given the vision and that you are there to compliment the vision and bring (the pastor’s) vision-musically-to the congregation.

There are certain things the pastor likes and certain things he don’t. You need to make an effort to follow his vision. The church will burst at the seams when the pastors marry the minister of music in ministry.
When there is not mutual respect and when the communication breaks down, things don’t work.

A lot of times, pastors and ministers of music may be at odds with one another because the minister of music may be defiant and rebellious. However, there are situations where the pastor has a problem with the minister of music because he or she may get a response from the people that the pastor only wants the people to give to the pastor.

The key to relationship between a minister of music and pastor is communication. The pastor needs to realize that more than an employer, the minister of music needs a pastor to speak into him or her, spend time—other than on Sundays. The pastor should pull the minister into the office and orders some pizza! Find out what’s in his or her heart. A lot of times the minister of music doesn’t have a clue what the pastor wants. If they communicate, the minister of music won’t look to the pastor as the bank, he’ll look to him as the man of God.

It is important that the music department and the pastor work in tandem to project a positive profile of the ministry. “A church is defined, not only by the pastor’s preaching gift and ability, but also by the music.”

There is a process involved in hiring a music minister and the changes in ministry today’s pastors should consider.

1. Invite a number of candidates (for the position) in and explain to them where you want to go with the music ministry.
2. Have them conduct a mini workshop so that you can get a feel for their teaching ability and taste in music.
3. Observe them in your environment.
4. Once you observe, narrow it down to the final candidates.
5. After much prayer. Make a decision to hire

Music has become far more complex in the life of the church now. Our churches have evolved to the point that we now have organized bands in our music departments. Before, you basically needed an organ player and a pianist and you were set. Now you need someone who can give leadership to the band, who has tremendous gifts and skills.

A minister of music has to serve multiple services (not just Sunday’s) and must be able to recreate that musical style in all settings. Stability in the music department is just as critical as stability in the pulpit.

A minister of music doesn’t necessarily have to play the instruments any more. He or she must give leadership to what has evolved into the fine arts ministry-inclusive of the music ministry and the praise dance ministry, etc.
We can’t emphasize enough the importance of a minister of music understanding his role and responsibility. As the pastor gets the vision for the house from God, it is the job of the minister of music to align himself and the entire music ministry with that vision. This not only refers to music and worship, but also every other aspect of the ministry as it relates to doctrine, policy, polity, stewardship, conduct, etc.

The minister of music and the music ministry become extensions of the pastor’s hands. Music is evangelistic and can reach sinners and minister to them, preparing them for the successful planting of the word of God. The minister of music must feel the pulse of the pastor’s heart. He must begin to think like him and move the ministry of music towards the same direction. It is of utmost importance for the minister of music and pastor to be on one accord so that the congregation is inspired, educated and lifted through both the sermon and the music, which serves as a handmaiden or servant for the spoken word.

You must understand why God created music. Ezekiel 28 talks about the anointed cherub who was created with tabrets and pipes. He didn’t need to hire a musical staff because he was the musical instruments! He was created by God with one purpose-to-worship Him! In understanding this, we conclude that music was created to minister unto God. Therefore, both the music department and the minister of music are vital because they are the ones who have been assigned to create an atmosphere of worship before the priest stands with the word of the Lord.

The importance of the minister of music and pastor being of one mind and spirit to allow the Holy Spirit to flow freely is vital. Having the same heart and goals, which are to magnify God and invoke his presence; to meet the needs of his people and for his name to be praised and worshipped.

The establishment of trust, respect, and friendship between the two is critical. Age is nothing but a number, but it takes maturity and good follower skills to be in this critical spot. Having a seasoned pastor walking in his anointing is highly needed, along with his concern for the saint’s souls and walk with Christ. It is God’s perfect will for the right team hook up in the spirit to advance the Kingdom of God and to fulfill destiny in our lives.

A good relationship is a major part of the success for most ministers of music/pastor teams. The two should keep in touch all the time, whether its work related or not. A good team should click! Have a good relationship away from the church. When a relationship clicks, it overflows into the professional, church ministry relationship. Having trust solidifies the business relationship. Music is such a powerful part of worship and growth; if you don’t do it in harmony and companionship and as a team, the growth isn’t going to happen. Even if you don’t hook up formally, hook up periodically as inspiration comes. Invite your pastor to your rehearsals!

Shun the ‘diva musician’ mentality. That’s a mindset and a spirit. But there are some churches that feed into that ‘divafied’ spirit, where they pay the musician so much extra money, just to do two or three things—I’m not even talking abut mega-churches.
These situations feed into a musician’s laziness, because they may have a young kid who’s making several thousand dollars a month, and doesn’t understand the value of responsibility or hard work. That makes this kind of person believe that everybody has to cater to him because he’s next to the highest man on the totem pole.

The key is that the musician has to realize that it’s a ministry. He has to realize God has given him a gift to bring glory to God, and if we can keep that mindset—that it ain’t about me, it’s about what God gets, then it can work.

Here’s a story to share: Many years a pastor and his minister of music were on two different pages. For many years, I viewed the minister of music as staff instead of as a friend who is co-laboring towards the same goal. Today, I make it my goal not only be on one accord with the music minister, but I also make it my point to be involved in the life of one burdened with such a tremendous responsibility. To not only be one’s employer but to also be their pastor and friend is the model of leadership I have found to be most conducive for a productive minister of music.

Like many pastors, for years I experienced the revolving door of church musicians until one day I was reminded that I was responsible for their lives after the benediction. God has entrusted his ministers of music with leading his people to relevant worship, likewise he has entrusted me with leading them constantly to Him. I have been honored to be part of some incredible people’s lives.

The relationship with the minister of music, music department and the pastor reminds us of the relationship of Moses and Aaron; Aaron was the mouth piece. Sometime the music is the mouthpiece for the pastor because what he can’t say in a sermon can often be relayed through music.

A team communicates not just with the pastor but with each other, so the music is presented in the best possible way. They work on their crafts as if they were doing it for God—not for fortune, fame, or the favor of any man. A pastor must recognize a commitment to meeting God’s standard. This allows him to relax and know that the pastor’s standards will not only be met but exceeded.

In closing, the ultimate connection for positive ministry is as follows: Dr James Abbington shares in his book, Let Mt Zion Rejoice, three things to ensure the minister of music and the pastor are on one accord: commitment, communication, and consecration.

The relationship at best should be that of a good marriage. A good marriage requires commitment from the parties involved. Constant communication fosters good partnership and finally consecration keeps the Lord as the central focus for both the minister of music and the pastor.