

## General Topics :: Rules to Appropriate Worship?

### Rules to Appropriate Worship? - posted by groh\_frog, on: 2007/1/28 20:12

Our church has been discussing some modern issues that have faced the church in general in recent years, and one issue that has come up is "what's appropriate worship?" Today, our pastor announced some rules for special music, some that I might question. Read these over, and if there's opinions, biblical justifications, or biblical contradictions to any of these, please open up! Here's the pamphlet as it was handed out:

It quotes Psalm 138:1-2 and Psalm 66:1-4 in the beginning.

The Music Ministry is meant to enhance the entire corporate Worship Service. Our Worship involves all the areas coming before God: Praise, Giving, Thankfulness, Singing, and Instruction from God's Word. Worship must be firmly based upon the truth of the Word. This truth must reach our inner man, our spirit, if it is to truly impact us. Worship should not be an intellectual exercise alone, but should be a spiritual expression of an intellectual truth that is felt deeply within the inner man. Therefore, it is important that when we come before the Lord in Music Ministry that we do so in a Biblical way.

#### I. A Right Heart Attitude

- If we are to minister to others we need to be certain that our hearts are right before the Lord.
- We need to be humble in spirit, realizing that our gifts come from the Lord and are to be used for Him.
- There should be no known areas of sin in our lives that are unconfessed.

#### II. An Appearance that Glorifies God

- Since God deserves our very best, we should dress in our best.
- We must be sure that we are modest in our apparel so as not to cause another to stumble.

#### III. Our Best Presentation

- We must be prepared ahead of time. Time and care should be given in choosing our song, practicing the song, so that we can do our very best.
- It is important to practice with the Sound Person/ and or pianist one week in advance or during the prior week so that any adjustments can be made ahead of time.

#### IV. Appropriate Music Selection

- Our first consideration should be the doctrinal accuracy of the words to a song. If there is any question about this, talk to the Pastor before you practice a song.
- The musical accompaniment to the spoken truth must be used carefully to contribute to the truth being expressed.
- We must be aware of musical tastes. Not all music will appeal to everyone. One of our tests for a song should be kept in mind that this is a church worship service and not just a big show.
- Our criteria in selecting mediums of worship expression must be the effectiveness by which the medium illuminates, magnifies, and compliments the theological message about God. The listener's attention should be drawn to words, not to music.

As these were handed out, the pastor re-emphasized some points, particularly that "Jeans and T-shirt" are inappropriate worship attire, and hinted that only certain forms of music, using certain instruments is appropriate. Where's the line where legalism can legitimately be drawn? Where's the line where you're missing the point of Worship?

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**Re: Rules to Appropriate Worship? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/1/28 23:12**

I am curious: how old are you? Sounds to me like you are a young person...

ginnyrose

**Re: Rules to Appropriate Worship? - posted by JennRich (), on: 2007/1/29 0:04**

These guidelines sound perfectly reasonable and God-glorifying to me. . . I know it might get sticky about what attire to wear to worship, but the motive behind that stipulation seems to be an honest endeavor to come before the Lord with due respect. We wouldn't go to an appointment with the President just wearing jeans and a t-shirt, would we?

At our church, we don't have a "rule" about what to wear, and as a matter of fact one of the Godliest ladies I know wears jeans quite often. But personally I feel more serious about worshipping the Lord when I'm dressed nicely. I also feel more ladylike when I wear a dress or skirt, and that's a good thing.

I guess our church staff and leaders sort of set the example about what to wear to church -- the men are usually in a jacket and tie, and most ladies are in dresses. But when visitors do show up in jeans or whatever, they go out of their way to make them feel welcome (and would never draw attention to their more casual attire).

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2007/1/29 0:43**

Quote:  
----- Our church has been discussing some modern issues that have faced the church in general in recent years, and one issue that has come up is "what's appropriate worship?" Today, our pastor announced some rules for special music, some that I might question.  
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This is the typical challenge when traditions are being reshaped. The list of rules you present basically seems reasonable. Personally I feel that it would have been better if those involved in music were all drawn into the process of setting boundaries rather than having them imposed on them from above. That helps build maturity and fosters willing cooperation. Even if all the musicians are young and immature, it still is better that they learn how to think and make decisions corporately. After all, it's not just about music, it's about building mature disciples -- and that IS part of the role of the spiritual leadership.

Quote:  
----- Where's the line where legalism can legitimately be drawn?  
-----

No where. Legalism is never the path to spiritual maturity. (that's a big topic in itself) However that doesn't mean that it is wrong to establish guidelines. Guidelines help maintain order and harmony. Also rules are needed because not everyone is mature or knows what is expected. As a musician I abide by thousands of rules -- rules of good musicianship, rules of good relationships, etc etc. Of course through training and experience they are now a natural part of me. I don't need someone to give me a list of rules. They are inside of me. (though I'm still learning: At the moment I am reading a book on choral conducting)

Re inappropriate instruments: It's probably more a case of insufficient skill. You can make just about any instrument sound inappropriate. And you can make just about any instrument sound appropriate. In my church there is a farmer who from time to time plays his cowbells - most tastefully.

Meanwhile, you would be best to graciously comply with the guidelines to the best of your ability -- and do all your music for the glory of God. You are not merely doing it for your pastor. You may not agree with it all, but the ministry will flow best if you accept it as it is.

Let me share something with you: I don't like all the rules (traditions) in my church, but by working with what exists, (I'm the minister of music) I gain respect, and can subtly introduce new ideas -- with their cooperation. So far it works better that way.

PS. I feel that a lot of tensions in the music area would dissolve if were seen in it's proper perspective. It is not nearly as important, in the bigger picture, as it is made out to be.

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Diane

**Re: Rules to Appropriate Worship? - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2007/1/29 2:09**

Hi groh\_frog...

Quote:

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groh\_frog wrote:

Our church has been discussing some modern issues that have faced the church in general in recent years, and one issue that has come up is "what's appropriate worship?" Today, our pastor announced some rules for special music, some that I might question. Read these over, and if there's opinion s, biblical justifications, or biblical contradictions to any of these, please open up! Here's the pamphlet as it was handed out...

...

As these were handed out, the pastor re-emphasized some points, particularly that "Jeans and T-shirt" are inappropriate worship attire, and hinted that only certain forms of music, using certain instruments is appropriate. Where's the line where legalism can legitimately be drawn? Where's the line where you're missing the point of Worship?

-----  
I agree with the essence of these guidelines. However, I do have an issue with the "Sunday best" comment.

I feel that the Church has been "dressing up" for far too long. What good is it to dress up in your "Sunday best" on Sundays (and for midweek meetings) when you do not dress this way in life? I believe that "MODESTY" is key -- and certainly a necessity. However, the meaning of the term itself varies from place to place.

I have heard the argument about dressing the same way to Church as you would to a wedding, a funeral, a trial, a business, etc... But would the Lord require that we "dress up" to spend time with him? Does the Lord require for His people to dress in such a manner in order to appear "acceptable" in the eyes of others? Of course, we should ALWAYS dress in modesty. But I have been to some Churches that REQUIRED men to wear coat and ties and women to wear nice dresses.

I feel comfortable (in life and amongst the Body of Christ) to wear jeans and pants. I once attended a large Church where the choir wore ornately decorated robes and the orchestra wore tuxedos. Sometimes, I wish that singers and musicians in some fellowships would remove the choir robes and wear simple and normal attire.

Wouldn't it be lovely if we could, in Biblical modesty, simply be ourselves in dress, tongue and action while in fellowship with other believers? Unfortunately, it seems that too many people prepare their outward adornment and wear it as a mask. I do believe that holiness extends to every aspect of our lives -- including our dress. But does a suit and tie reflect *holiness* or does it reflect *money*? Are jeans, a shirt and sneakers immodest? What if a poor believer desired to play his instrument unto the Lord -- but could not afford a shirt and tie or slacks? What would be our excuse for telling him, "*No thanks?*"

I often wonder how the early Church, during the height of persecution, conducted meetings. Did they worry about dressing up for such meetings, or did they wear their normal attire when believers fellowshiped together?

:-)

By the way, I attend a small fellowship where there are no "set" rules for attire other than the guideline of Biblical modesty. We do not seem to have a problem with dress. While some of our few musicians will wear jeans, it is done tastefully and in modesty. The presence of the Lord is still evidenced in our hunger for Him.

**Re: - posted by groh\_frog, on: 2007/1/29 3:31**

I'll try to answer a few questions at once.

Ginny, I've talked with you before, and you're absolutely right- I am a "young person".

Also, I should clarify something I had said- while there is never a place for legalism, there is a place for simple, unquestioning obedience. Where are rules meant to stand?

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Maybe it's a "loaded" post, but whenever you dress a certain way, or perform a certain type of music, you run a very strong risk of doing it for show. While the world respects looking "sharp", requiring it for worship seems to me a sign that you're missing the point entirely.

This debate is one of those age-old debates that sweeps churches with diverse congregations. I heard an elderly gentle man comment this past week that "I hope when the Lord returns, the first things he destroys are the drums and guitars..." My question, as younger generations (ginny) are asking, is "is this a biblical stance, or is simply unbased tradition?" Something of opinion, spun up to become the measure of right and wrong?

Maybe with a few things cleared up, where do you draw the line in a diverse church? Are we really going up front to look nice and impress onlookers, or is there some real point of this fellowship? How do you justify that stance?

I honestly, maybe to a fault, can't stand the phrase "put on your Sunday best", as if looking nice at church makes the God Lord happier with us. There's a time and place to dress nicely, but only resulting from man's tendency to judge upon looks. That's hardly a good thing, in my opinion. But when we have to please a stigma before we can speak to the heart, is something in the way?

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/1/29 18:23**

Groh\_frog wrote:

That's hardly a good thing, in my opinion. But when we have to please a stigma before we can speak to the heart, is something in the way?

To answer your question it is "yes".

Mind if I share a little bit of history?

My generation spawned the hippie movement in the 60s which was a movement rooted in rebellion to the social mores that existed. Hippies flaunted their immorality, used drugs openly and talked about it, and dressed sloppy. Their dress was a reflection of their rebellion to any sense of decency there was in society.

Until this point in time, people "dressed up" when they appeared in public, be it in town to go shopping, to church, the ball game or calling on friends. They did it out of respect to others. People were sensitive to others' feelings about what was considered proper. It was a mentality of loving your neighbor, honoring the other person, being considerate.

Fast forward. The hippie movement changed all that. The focus turned to self: what I want is more important than others' opinions, feeling on any subject. The youth decided the church no longer had any authority on any issue. It all was on self and the need to gratify it.

This, young man, is what the older generation witnessed and hence, the roots of their concern.

Now to answer another immediate question about how should musicians dress: is it possible to dress in a way that would not call any attention to yourself? Let's face it: jeans are not appropriate to wear in front of a crowd: they are too tight; draw attention to a part of the anatomy that is best left unnoticed...do you see what I mean? Can you not dress that would minimize your physical body and the audience's focus will be on the music and not on the performers themselves? Do you not think that to do otherwise would be one that would feed the ego more than bring honor and glory to the LORD Jesus?

Just something to think about....

Blessings,  
ginnyrose

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**Re: - posted by DIETTOSELF (), on: 2007/1/29 20:21**

Amen Ginnyrose!! Is there a standard anymore? Tolerance has taken over the church!! The physical church seems to tolerate anything and everything there is no rules of conduct or dress.

I heard someone put down catechisms and this really made me think. Now tell me what is wrong with abiding by a certain catechism? I can think of some really good ones that should be implemented in the church youth today; Wesley's, Spurgeons, etc... These were a Godly standard to live by not rules just obedience. These are not our justification by all means. But I do believe there should be a moral standard in and outside the church as far as dress goes and many other issues. If these catechisms were taught today with the vigor they were written with at the time.....

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2007/1/30 1:33**

Hi ginnyrose...

Quote:  
-----Now to answer another immediate question about how should musicians dress: is it possible to dress in a way that would not call any attention to yourself? Let's face it: jeans are not appropriate to wear in front of a crowd: they are too tight; draw attention to a part of the anatomy that is best left unnoticed...do you see what I mean? Can you not dress that would minimize your physical body and the audience's focus will be on the music and not on the performers themselves? Do you not think that to do otherwise would be one that would feed the ego more than bring honor and glory to the LORD Jesus?  
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While I certainly agree with the concept and need for Biblical modesty, I disagree with this opinion about jeans. I wear jeans with regularity. I do not wear "tight" or "form fitting" jeans. I wear relaxed fit or loose fit jeans because of their comfort and durability. I have worn them to school, work, and yes, church meetings. Contrary to this assessment, I feel that jeans can actually be less "attention drawing" than nice slacks or pants.

Again, jeans are not a product of the 1960s. They have been around since the 18th Century (C. 1740s). At the time, they were work clothes created for durability. In fact, "dungarees" were available two centuries earlier (in the 16th Century) using thick material from India. Denim jeans were widely popular in America between 1840 and 1940 -- because America was a frontier nation. Farmers and workers required thick, durable clothing. The 1960s certainly brought about the most modest changes to dress -- including the styles of jeans (like "hip-huggers" or "slim fit"). It was during the 1960s that tight jeans became "fashionable."

We really need to be careful about using measuring lines for outward standards of holiness. The key, as stated before, is MODESTY. Do we really need to create rules so that people will continue to respect the key? It is my opinion that jeans are NOT necessarily immodest. If a congregation will turn their eyes from Jesus because of a pair of jeans worn by a guitar player, then the congregation really needs a stronger relationship with Jesus.

There are various denominations that hold certain requirements in dress. There are some that have color restrictions, material restrictions, and certain dress-type restrictions. All of them, no doubt, base their rules (or "standards" and "guidelines") on a desire to not draw attention to one's body. If this were the most important factor in determining proper dress, then we would ALL (both men and women) walk around completely covered like devout Shiite women (faces and heads covered and bodies covered in long robes).

Should a local congregation dictate such standards? OR should the local church impress the congregation to JUDGE THEMSELVES by Biblical modesty? When so many believers and congregations define modesty by different standards, it becomes difficult to try and impress such opinionated standards on other believers.

This is not an embrace of an "anything goes" philosophy. On the contrary, a pastor (or more appropriately, parents) can certainly point out gross violations of true modesty. But we must be careful to separate our own opinions or beliefs from "measuring rod" standards which would be considered doctrinal truth.

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**General Topics :: Rules to Appropriate Worship?**

**Re: Rules to Appropriate Worship? - posted by Meriwether, on: 2007/1/30 1:39**

Dear groh\_frog,

I kinda liked that list, but I am a big fuddy duddy.

This might not be the case, but possibly the rules were formally written because of one or more seriously inappropriate folks whom the minister did not want to single out.

Here's a thought. During the millinium kingdom, when everyone will presumably go to the temple during the feast of tabernacles, what sort of clothing do you think they'll wear in the presence of the King? What sort of music do you think might be offered? I don't know... I'm just thinkin'

In Him,  
C.M.

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/1/30 8:09**

ccchhhrrriiisss,

You are absolutely right in how long jeans have been worn. When I was a child going to school, boys wore jeans but never to church. This was a garment worn to school, to work in the fields, to do the chores like feeding the animals, the chickens, the hogs. When you came in from doing these tasks, you cleaned up - not take any showers, there were no showers then and baths were only taken once a week, needed or not!:-P Back then the wearing of tees was underwear. Today it is worn as an outer garment! {{sigh}}

Many modern will also wear loose 'jeans' (or what are they called?) and you wonder if they are going to fall down and expose themselves? So if a person dressed like that is in front of me, I keep getting concerned about it...you see I am a mom and moms worry about propriety.

Modesty....many today have no clue what is and do not care to know. Any suggestion is met with derision which will also earn you the label of being a legalist. {{sigh}}

ginnyrose

**Re: Rules to Appropriate Worship? - posted by enid, on: 2007/1/30 9:23**

Whilst this thread is about both music and clothing, I'll deal only with clothing for now.

When God gave instructions to Moses about the priestly garments for Aaron and his sons, it was for them to come before God in.

They changed into these garments when ministering in the tabernacle, and removed them when they had finished.

Whilst we might think some garments are okay for church, and some are not, we have to go by our convictions, by the word of God, and not the opinion of others.

How is it that people can go to church looking shabby and homeless, and do so for the glory of God?

How is it God gets the dregs of our appearance, because, after all, it's only church, it's not as if we are meeting anyone important?

In Malachi 1v7-8, God is telling the people they are offering Him defiled food, the blind, the lame, the sick. He then says, offer it then to your governor.

In other words, they think more of the governor, president, king, queen, than they do of God.

Still, if you're okay with your way of dressing, with no conviction, good.

Romans 14v23, He who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith, for whatever is not from faith is sin.

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Whilst that scripture speaks concerning food, it concludes with saying 'whatever is not from faith is sin'.

Let us be settled in our mind that whatever we do we do with a clear conscience.

God bless.

### Re: - posted by groh\_frog, on: 2007/1/30 11:09

I had said before that I believe there's a time and a place for dressing up. But it's only necessary because of the fact that we (humans) tend to judge a person by looks. If a group of people can't listen to an evangelist because he's not dressed up enough, it would be better for him to simply dress up. But when it comes to worship- where you have to dress a certain way, perform a certain way, with only certain types of music... It's a performance!

I talked with our pastor about this the other night. He explained some of the reasoning behind the rules as they now stood. Mostly, they came from some of the more elderly in the church complaining that "that song seemed too fast", etc. Basically, because of difference of opinions, the pastor was willing to "lay down the law" on those issues. Unfortunately, I believe he did it without biblical basis. When tradition or preference becomes law, you're starting to head down a scary path.

This isn't something worth splitting a church over, as sometimes happens. It's sad in my opinion, but cultural preferences have a tendency to clash. We ended up asking our music leader to take me and my wife's names off of the "special music" list.

### Re: - posted by Bramwell, on: 2007/1/30 11:57

Well done, Enid and Ginnyrose and Diedtosef and Jennrich. Whether we like it or not, God set the highest standards for the clothing of his priests, and we are all His priests under the New Covenant. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price and we are to glorify God in our bodies. So it matters to God the way that we dress. Let's get rid of this slovenliness in our services and meetings. God deserves the very best, and nothing less.

Of course, we should welcome people, whatever they are wearing, but it is also our responsibility to hold up God's standards, and tell people what our thrice holy God, who is a consuming fire, deserves and demands. As has been mentioned, if we were going to meet a president or a king, we would, I trust, dress in our very best clothes, and rightly so. How much more does the King of Kings deserve the very, very best, especially from those who publicly minister in music or speech?

It isn't a matter of wearing particular clothes, but of wearing our very best clothes, not working clothes, whatever they are.

The situation is made worse by the fact that many of the people in our churches wear really nice clothes when they go to work, to please their boss, but dress in a very casual way when going to church services, showing that they think more of their earthly bosses than they do of our Eternal God. What incredible disrespect this is.

Ginny is right in saying that this slapdash, irreverent way of dressing in any old clothes for worship is a demonstration of the rebellion against authority that has taken place over the past decades, exemplified in sayings such as "I will dress as I want, and nobody is going to tell me what to wear," etc. Such attitudes are a million miles away from the true Christian attitudes of self-denial, thinking of others before yourself, not doing anything to offend others and, above all, doing only what pleases Him.

### Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2007/1/30 12:47

Hello...

As I stated earlier, I certainly agree with the essence of what those rules were trying to accomplish. Modesty is certainly a necessity -- particularly when certain individuals use their "freedom" to include selfish immodesty or reckless abandon. The same large Church fellowship that required ornate choir robes and tuxedos for musicians had many youth wearing extremely short skirts and shorts! The pastor finally put his foot down (so to speak) and asked parents to guard their children -- protecting them from causing sin in others.

As for jeans, please don't confuse "loose fit" from merely "loose" jeans. My jeans certainly fit me. However, they are loose in the same manner as more expensive pants. They do not hang down or expose myself. Please do not misunderstand that I am attempting to justify my own habits of dress or propriety. I stand confident before the Lord that I dress in modesty and decency.

## General Topics :: Rules to Appropriate Worship?

I suppose one of the great fallacies within the Church today is the concept of a building as a temple, sanctuary or tabernacle. Some believers treat a "Church building" as if it were particularly holy. It is no more holy than our houses. It is brick, mortar, timber and tile. The veil was rent in two. The presence of God's Spirit is no longer "confined" to a "house of worship." Remember, the Lord said, "*Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*" (John 4:21). I am amazed at the individuals that treat the building as if God confined himself there. If we lived with the knowledge that God resides WITHIN US everywhere we go -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week -- then we might be less willing to glorify a building.

Our bodies are indeed the temple of the Holy Spirit. The original temple was adorned with specificities such as cedar and gold. The New Testament warns against such outward adornment (I Timothy 2:9-10; I Peter 3:3-4). Instead, both Paul and Peter urge inner propriety of the heart. We are no longer bound by the Levitical requirements of the law -- even for musicians.

I urge believers to approach the concept of modesty, propriety in dress and propriety within a local Church outside of a distinctly western perspective. Much of what is incorporated as western "Church propriety" is taken from the pagan origins of the Roman traditions. Such traditions treated Church buildings as "holy sanctuaries" -- while many true believers were secretly meeting in homes and forests. There are believers around the world that are still forced to meet in secret places because of persecution -- just like the early Church. Do they "dress up in their Sunday best" when they meet together?

As I stated earlier, MODESTY is key. However, such modesty is not limited to a Church building. It is part of our character throughout our lives.

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