



Barabbas Music Ministry Manual

Serving the Gathered Saints

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Thank you for desiring to use your musical gifts for God’s glory! Please take the time to read through our [doctrinal statement](#) and this manual so that you understand our ministry philosophy, expectations, and structure.

“The foundation of doxology is theology, and the goal of theology is doxology. Songs are praise and adoration. Songs are teaching and exhorting. Songs are sermons.”

Matt Boswell

“Worship is all we are responding to all He is.”

John McArthur

“Worship is the response of the redeemed to God’s self-revelation in Christ by the Holy Spirit.”

Bob Kauflin

“Shouldn’t we hear from Him first before we tell God what we think of Him?”

Ron Man

“Music is a wonderful servant, but a horrible master.”

Harold Best

“We tell the gospel by the way we worship.”

Brian Chapell

“What is at stake on Sunday morning? People’s view of God.”

Joseph Crider

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Sunday Morning Philosophy | The Body not the Band

Our overall goal is to join with the gathered saints in worship of the triune God through music. We play with undistracting excellence that the body may sing and Christ's name may be exalted.

1. **The singing of the gathered church is a theologically formative experience.**
 - a. The words matter, and they will be remembered. They must reverently point to our Creator, Redeemer, and Victor who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. While we value no particular style/era, the words must be theologically rich, Christ-focused, God-honoring, doctrinally sound, and able to teach (*Col 3:16a*).
 - b. The words must be [centered in truth and not experience](#). Emotion can be a wonderful, God-given experience, so long as it is rooted in truth and in response to truth (*Ps 19:14; Jer 17:9-10; Heb 4:12*).
 - c. Worship is a rhythm of revelation and response – we are responding to who God is and what He has done [according to Scripture](#) (*Ps 19:7-11, 111*). What we *know* about God fuels our *response* to Him.
 - d. In our liturgy we desire to follow the contour of the Gospel and remind one another of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration (*Gn 1; Ps 19; Jn 1:1-18; Col 1:15-23; Heb 1; Eph 1:3-14; 1 Pe 1:3-25*).
 - e. [What is at stake](#) on Sunday morning? **People's view of God.**
2. **We seek to play with undistracting excellence and *join* the congregation in singing.**
 - a. We, the musicians, serve the body. We play in a way that enables the congregation to sing. If it serves this purpose, we can do it.
 - b. Volume is lower so people can hear themselves and each other sing.
 - c. Song keys are mindful of average vocal ranges.
 - d. Complexity and showiness are minimized to prevent the distraction of [performancism](#).
 - e. The songs are sung in response to truth (i.e. Scripture), not the leader's musings or the feeling of a song.
 - f. If you're an instrumentalist, we would like you to seek to sing as you play. This encourages the congregation, greater engagement with the truths we are singing, and helps to moderate what we play.
 - g. If you are a vocalist, generally we sing just melody until the 2nd verse. Unless the song is well known, we do not typically add harmony on the 1st verse so that the congregation can clearly hear the melody.
 - h. All musicians should dress modestly, i.e., clothes that do not draw undue attention to the individual wearing them. That includes revealing or tight clothing, shirts with loud graphics or logos, or clothes that are unusually shabby. Men - please wear pants and close-toed shoes.
3. **We want you to serve! We do not need you to serve.**
 - a. We do not *need* lots of musicians. The gathered saints are the choir of the God's redeemed. We want them to sing! One voice with one instrument can serve that purpose, but we *want you* to serve with the desire to facilitate the singing of the gathered saints to God's glory, not perform on stage.
 - b. Participation in the music ministry is not a right, but a *privilege*. Serving with your time and talent is an *offering*. This looks like intentional preparation, humility, an attitude of service, and reliability. These traits serve the body, show respect to other musicians, and most importantly, glorify God.
4. **Distinctives** (See Dr. Joseph Crider's wonderful articulation of these distinctives at [Artistic Theologian](#), also linked above)
 - a. Worship in Spirit and truth (*Jn 4:23*) is only possible when the Word of truth is proclaimed (*Col 3:16a*).
 - b. Self-actuated worship is no more possible than self-actuated salvation. God initiates worship through the living Word, Jesus Christ, articulated through the written Word in the power of the Holy Spirit (*Jn 1:18, 15:26, 16:13-15, 17:17; 1 Co 2:9-13*).
 - c. God reveals and His people respond – this is the rhythm of worship (*Ps 96, 98, 100, 119:41-48, 150:1-2*).
 - d. Congregational singing is our goal (*Col 3:16b; Eph 5:19; Ps 22:22, 96:2, 145:1-150:6*). It is about serving the body, not showcasing talent.

Music Ministry Portrait | Character, Competence, Commitment

1. Character

- a. We value character over competence. Your faithful walk is more important than your talent. You are not merely volunteering – **you are ministering** to the congregation with your time and talent. You should be an example to follow. Your personal commitment to following Christ and involvement in the fellowship is crucial to that end. This is not something that can be monitored per se – this responsibility is entrusted to you. Our aim is to seek to honor Christ and the gospel not only with our songs but also in our personal devotions, relationships, and daily lives.
- b. Contribute to a culture of encouragement and honoring, looking for ways to point out how God is using those around you. You are encouraged to humbly give and receive constructive feedback in order to help foster a culture of healthy growth and pursuit of excellence.

2. Competence

- a. Talent is important, but preparation is more important. You do not have to be a virtuoso, but you do need to be able to play and/or sing our songs comfortably. The initial skill assessment will assess this on a basic level, but the amount of preparation you require week-to-week will be based on your own honest self-assessment.
- b. The basic level of competence we are looking for is the ability to dynamically play in any key in time and in tune. Capo is fine for guitar, but be comfortable playing in all open keys (C, A, G, E, D).
- c. Be able to self-assess intonation (guitar/bass) and tuning (all stringed instruments) issues.
- d. Know, maintain, and practice your instrument. Seek to grow in your skills both during rehearsals and if possible, during the week.
- e. Vocalists: God has gifted many people with beautiful voices, and we want everyone in our church to serve weekly in the choir of the congregation. *However*, to be a scheduled vocalist in this ministry you must be able to support the lead vocalist with harmonies. You might be asked in advance to sing melody on occasion, but this will not be the normal practice. For vocalists that need resources to help find and constantly deliver a harmony part, we strive to provide a higher harmony part and lower harmony part in both audio and sheet music form so that you can prepare one of these parts in advance before rehearsal. **The expectation for scheduled vocalists is that you will come to rehearsal with a prepared, consistent, predictable harmony part.** This is the same expectation for all the instrumentalists to come to rehearsal with their part prepared. This allows us to schedule multiple vocalists on a given Sunday and fosters our philosophy of rehearsing what you have already practiced at home.

3. Commitment

- a. Attend Barabbas on days you are not playing (in keeping with the character section above).
- b. Confirm or decline in PCO within a week of being scheduled.
- c. Communicate through PCO using blackout dates for times you know you will be gone.
- d. Communicate immediately and directly with the leader for that Sunday if something comes up after you have confirmed a position.
- e. Make thorough use of the resources in PCO, and reach out if you think any additional resources would be helpful.
- f. Be prepared for rehearsal by practicing at home. **Excellence is not accidental: be prepared.**
- g. You are expected to have your own printouts or tablet for lyrics/charts/music ~~or~~ arrive early to rehearsal and print them out. **Please take notes during rehearsal** so that Sunday morning sound-check is streamlined and excess time is not devoted to remembering what changes were made during rehearsal.
- h. You are highly encouraged to use the Music Stand app. It is free, links to your PCO account, and permanently saves your notes.
- i. Bring your own in-ear monitors/earbuds. We can provide you with 1 set initially.
- j. If you do not have the time (due to season of life, for example) to have this level of commitment, be honest about it. It is perfectly fine if you are unable to serve for a season. We can always revisit it in 6 months, a year, or however long you need! And there is always a need for service elsewhere that requires less of a time commitment.

Preparation Expectations | Practice, Rehearse, Play

1. Practice at home

- a. Practice with the Barabbas/Studio/Harmony demos and/or a metronome.
- b. Use the audio files, charts, and scores to learn the song.
 - i. The “**Barabbas Demo**” (when present) is your primary resource. It lays the foundational order and dynamics. It does not necessarily represent exactly what you should play, but it *does* represent what I will be doing and you should be comfortable playing along with it.
 - ii. The “**Studio Demo**” (when present) is an additional resource and contains the originally recorded parts (live or in studio) for your reference. You are encouraged to learn these parts.
 - iii. The “**Harmony Demos**” with accompanying sheet music are for vocalists that need resources to help find and constantly deliver a harmony part in advance before rehearsal. The expectation for scheduled vocalists is that you will come to rehearsal with a prepared, consistent, predictable harmony part.
 - iv. Be flexible and *always* reach out with questions if there is *any* confusion in PCO.
- c. Try to answer your questions about the songs with the resources available. Feel free to send follow up questions after you have reviewed these resources.
- d. What’s the goal?
 - i. Know the song well enough that the key, tempo, intro, transitions, and ending are somewhat intuitive.
 - ii. Know the song well enough that a passing glance at the chord chart will keep you on track. It should serve as a reminder and guide. Musicians who prefer to use a *score* should be intimately familiar with the score. It is not expected that the scores and charts are memorized.
 - iii. Know the dynamics but be ready to flex in rehearsal and on Sunday. This **DOES NOT** mean listen to the song once the day before. That is not “familiarity” in a practical sense.
 - iv. In terms of dynamics, find places to play little or not at all in every song. Part of being dynamic is knowing when *not* to play.

2. Rehearse what you have learned

- a. Use the chord chart as a reference and to annotate changes.
- b. What’s the goal at rehearsal?
 - i. Rehearse team dynamics, intros, outros, and transitions.
 - ii. Make changes if required/desired and **take notes**.
 - iii. We will generally work on specific parts and play through each song once or twice.
 - iv. Ask questions that you felt were minor enough to save until rehearsal.
- c. Rehearsal **IS NOT** your time to learn the song or your part. This is disrespectful of the time it takes to create, compile, and provide resources for your own practice, as well as everyone else’s time and preparation.

3. Play what you know

- a. A great word here to describe Sunday morning is “**effectuate:**” **to put into force or operation**. Play with intimate familiarity, reference the chord chart as required, and sing! Not only is our desire as a team to play with undistracting excellence, but we are also to join the congregation that we are leading in praise of the triune God.
- b. Excellence is not about playing things perfectly necessarily, it is about giving your best in preparation and being better each time – that is your *offering*. Mistakes will happen and there will always be things that we can do better, but a consistent lack of preparation leading to frequent mistakes is not in keeping with excellence.

Ministry Structure | Steps to Serve

1. Getting Involved

- a. To get involved, you **must** be a baptized follower of Christ and consider Barabbas your church home through regular attendance for at least 3 months. We *want* you to be involved in a 2:42 group for mutual encouragement, accountability, and building relationships outside Sunday morning. **You are ministering**, not merely volunteering. As such we desire that you are investing in the body in this way.
- b. **Step 1:** Read our [Doctrinal Statement](#).
- c. **Step 2:** Read this manual (yay, you're already doing it!).
- d. **Step 3:** Fill out the online Music Ministry Interest Form.
- e. Wait to be contacted and be patient – it will be 6 or more weeks before you are involved on a Sunday morning.
- f. Gain access to Planning Center Online via the welcome e-mail you receive and **download the “Services” app**. I also highly recommend the “Music Stand” app.
- g. Accept the Skill Assessment invitation in PCO and prepare for the Skill Assessment.
- h. When you are ready (take your time, no rush), take the Skill Assessment. Be prepared for one of the three following responses:
 - i. You were well prepared and have the level of competence and confidence we desire. How often do you desire to serve and when are you available to be scheduled?
 - ii. You have some areas where you need to grow. We recommend some practice/lessons and a re-assessment in 6 months.
 - iii. You are not a fit for the music ministry at this time. Please considering serving in another area where we need you!

2. Scheduling

- a. You must be available 7:30-8:45pm Thursday evening and 8:30am-12:00pm on Sunday the weeks you play. When you confirm a request in PCO, you are confirming your availability for both times. If there is any doubt, communicate with the leader for that week and/or decline within a week so a request can be sent out to someone else in a timely manner.
- b. 4 weeks out: Scheduling email sent.
- c. 2 weeks out: Songs posted, email sent.
- d. Monthly: review your schedule and input your known blackout dates 6 weeks out.

3. Rehearsal

- a. Rehearsal is on Thursday at 7:30pm for 1hr 15min at the Ministry Center.
- b. Show up early to set up.
- c. Be tuned, in place, plugged in, ready to play and take notes at the listed time.

4. Sunday Morning Timeline

- a. 7:45 – Sanctuary open. You can arrive as early as this time to help out, set up, or practice on your own.
- b. 8:30 – Show time (please be *in the sanctuary* by this time regardless of your role on Sunday)
- c. 8:45 – Sound Check
 - i. Review key elements (intros/outros/transitions) as time permits
 - ii. We will run through as much as we can, time-permitting.
- d. 9:55 – Prayer
- e. 9:57 – In place. Double check tuning, connections, charts, etc.
- f. 9:59 – Ready to play
- g. 10:00 – Start
- h. Get in place during post-sermon prayer. Be ready to play after communion prayer.