

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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December 6, 2020

### ***“Pitch-Pipes And PowerPoint”***

by Bryan Hodge

Members of the church of Christ have historically emphasized that the Bible teaches that we should have Biblical authority for what we do. God has required such. He did under the Old Covenant (e.g. Leviticus 10:1-2; I Samuel 13:9-14; II Chronicles 26:16-21). He does under the New Covenant (e.g. Acts 15:22-24; Colossians 3:17 – Thayer indicates that to do a thing "in the name of" is used of "by one's command and authority"; Vine's indicates that it can mean "in recognition of the authority of").

Some ask "What about pitch-pipes?" and "What about PowerPoint?"

I believe that there are two types of people who ask such questions.

1. Some are people who do not believe in this hermeneutical approach to the Bible. They reject the need to limit worship (and other matters) to what is authorized by explicit statements, accounts of action (examples), and implication in the Bible. Therefore, they ask such questions to ridicule the need for authority (reduction ad absurdum), or to expose what they believe is an inconsistency in our practice (note: showing an inconsistency in us does not prove their position).
2. Others are people who believe that we must have Biblical authority for what we do. However, they do not understand how such things are authorized.

People may ask these questions for different reasons. Whatever the reason, let us provide an answer.

### **Generic Command versus Specific Command**

A generic command is a command to do something, but certain specifics are not mentioned. A few examples:

1. Christians are to assemble on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The hour has not been specified. God has left it to man to decide. The place has not been specified. Israelite males were required to worship in Jerusalem, three times per year (Deuteronomy 16:16 cf. II Chronicles 7:12; I Kings 12:27; Luke 2:41-42). No such requirement exists for Christians. The church met in various locations (Acts 8:1; 13:1; 18:22; Romans 16:1; 16:3-5; I Corinthians 1:2; 16:19; II Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2; I Peter 5:13; Revelation 1:11; 2:1; 2:8; 2:12; 2:18; 3:1; 3:7; 3:14).
2. Christians are to give on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). How this giving is to be collected is not specified. Should it be dropped into a box? Should we pass a hat? God has left such details to man.
3. Christians are to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). The type of songs are specified: psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. However, the specific songs and how to start these songs are not specified. Therefore, God has left such to man (e.g. song books, song leader, the pitch and speed of the song).

A specific command is a command to do something with certain things specified. A few examples:

1. God did not just tell Noah to build the ark; He told Noah to build the ark out of gopher wood, with certain features, and dimensions (Genesis 6:13-16). Where God has specified, man is not at liberty.
2. God did not tell Christians to make music (any music). He specified the type of music (singing) and the type of songs to be used (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs).



3. Jesus did not tell His disciples to eat and drink something remembering Him. He specified the elements (Matthew 26:26-28). Unleavened bread (cf. Exodus 12) and the fruit of the vine (grape juice) are to be used.

## Expedient versus Addition

I am using the word 'expedient' to refer to an aid to carry out God's command. A few examples:

1. Saws and hammers may have been expedients to Noah's building the ark.
2. A collection plate may be an expedient to gathering the collection.
3. A podium may be an expedient to preaching and teaching.
4. Song books may be an expedient to singing.

So also may be the use of an overhead projector or PowerPoint to display the words and musical notes of the song. An expedient does not add to what is being done.

I am using the word 'addition' to refer to an unauthorized addition to what God commanded. A few examples:

1. The use of another kind of wood in the ark (e.g. oak, pine, etc.) would have been an addition.
2. The use of chicken and iced tea, along with unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, would be an addition.
3. The use of purely patriotic songs, along with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, would be an addition.
4. The use of instrumental music in our worship is an addition to the command to sing.

## Pitch-Pipe

It is possible for one to use the pitch-pipe as a musical instrument, like a harmonica, to play a tune. Moreover, it could be used this way with the intent of worshipping God. Such would be an addition. However, it is an expedient to use a pitch-pipe to get a pitch in preparation to leading a song. There is no intent to worship with such. The pitch-pipe ceases to be blown before the intended song of worship begins.

Consider this comparison: A song leader may clear his throat before leading a song. He does so preparing to worship in song. He does not do so as a part of worship. N.B. Hardeman said in one of his tabernacle sermons of 1923, "I have been told ...that there is just as much scripture for the organ or piano or flute or violin as there is the tuning fork... they are not parallel... You watch what a tuning fork does... I strike it here, and it gives the pitch of the music to be sung..."

When does worship begin? In the singing of the song. There was an old gentleman in my town who in answer to this, once made this remark 'the difference between a tuning fork and the organ is this: that the tuning fork has enough respect for God to quit before worship begins, while an organ continues all the way through.' Let me say to my friends who use the organ that if you would use it as a tuning fork, let it stop before we commence to worship God, I would not open my mouth against it." (Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons Vol. 2, p. 278).

G.K. Wallace said, in the Wallace-Hunt debate of 1951, "All right, now what are we doing with the tuning fork? We do not produce music with it. The singing is a result. The singing is a result of getting pitch. You get the pitch"(Wallace-Hunt Debate, p. 37).

Guy N. Woods said, "The tuning fork gives the leader the pitch of the first note and is silent when the worship begins. This is one great difference between a tuning fork and organ or piano – the tuning fork knows when to quit!" (Woods, Questions and Answers, Vol. 2, p. 34).

## PowerPoint

It is an expedient to use PowerPoint. In singing, its function may be likened to the song book (It displays the words and notes of the song). In preaching and teaching it may function as a Bible (displaying the text being studied) or as a visual aid (much like white boards, chalk boards, overhead projectors, hand-out notes, flannel boards and sheet sermons – preachers of an earlier generation often presented their points on white sheets which were suspended before the audience).

The use of visual aids is authorized. They were used in the Old covenant (e.g. Jeremiah 18:1-ff; 19:1-ff; Ezekiel 4:1-3; 12:1-7; 24:1-14). They may be used under the New Covenant (e.g. Acts 21:10-11).

Let us be careful Bible students. Let us discern between good and evil. Let us discern between what is an expedient and what is an addition.



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# **“Learning Obedience” Part 1**

Lesson Text: **Hebrews 5:8-9.**

## **I. Obedience Starts When We Listen To God.**

**A. Deuteronomy 5:27; Deut. 18:18-19; Deut. 31:11-13.**

**B. Matthew 7:24-26; John 10:27; John 18:37.**

**C. Not Listening To God Is Disobedience:**

(1) **Matthew 13:13-15.**

(2) **Acts 7:57.**

(3) **Hebrews 5:11-12.**

## **II. Obedience Demands Submission To God.**

**A. Christ Submitted to the Father:**

(1) **Philippians 2:5-8.**

(2) **John 12:49-50.**

(3) **Luke 22:43.**

**B. We Submit To Christ:**

(1) **Matthew 28:18-20.**

(2) **Colossians 1:16-19.**

**C. Not Submitting To God Is Disobedience:**

(1) **Jeremiah 17:23.**

(2) **Acts 7:51.**

(3) **Psalms 78:8.**

## **III. Obedience Requires Action On Our Part.**

**A. Deuteronomy 5:31-33.**

(1) *“Keep”*

(2) *“Observe”*

(3) *“Perform”*

(4) *“Do”*

**B. Psalm 143:10.**

**C. Not Doing God’s Will Is Disobedience:**

(1) **Matthew 7:21.**

(2) **James 1:22-25.**

(3) **James 4:17.**

**D. Not “Christ-like”- John 8:29.**

**E. Our Relationship Is Sustained By Obedience:**

(1) **John 15:1-2; John 15:9-10.**

(2) **1 John 2:3-4.**

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles Melissa Felks, Star, and Roy Robinson.

**Those Who Serve:**

<b>Announcements:</b>	Russell Briggs
<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Scripture Reading:</b>	Lee Busby <i>Hebrews 5:8-9</i>
<b>Song Leader:</b>	Paul Busby
<b>Lord's Supper:</b>	Doug George
<b>Preaching:</b>	Brian Meade
<b>Sermon:</b>	<i>"Learning Obedience" Part 1</i>
<b>Closing Prayer:</b>	Nathan Meade