

## The Christian Musician and the Primacy of the Local Church

Mike Haynes

I would wage a bet that most readers of this article are juggling multiple responsibilities. In my past (and current) student days, the busyness was sometimes so great that it was an enigma trying to plan practice time, do church internship responsibilities, do homework, keep up with things at home, and be social. Although I learned much from undergrad, I fear the cloud of responsibility led to a weak understanding of the primacy of the local church in my life. I never pursued any type of membership, and when I did pursue it towards the end of my time at BJU, it was merely for the reason of my internship. Being a healthy church member while in school wasn't my priority. But in reality, the time spent in school and most other responsibilities you will have in life are necessary but temporary stewardships. The point I aim to make is that a proper relationship to the local assembly is the primary stewardship of all believers.<sup>1</sup> We know this for three reasons: God has saved us, gifted us, and called us to serve in the local assembly.

*God has saved you into a local assembly.* The purpose to which God saves his people is not merely for their personal redemption, but also that they be brought together into one body for his glory (see Eph 2:13–18, Col 3:15–17.) What we commit ourselves to is mutual edification of believers and spiritual growth that leads to greater Christlikeness (Eph 4:11–16, cf. Heb 10:24–25.) For your life as a music student, you must have a clear understanding of what you have been saved into. Neither student life, nor any other program can be a substitute for God's intention for the local church in your life. Whether you are an incoming student, or multiple semesters into your degree, let it be a primary action to commit yourself to a healthy church that is faithfully preaching the Word of God and committed to the edification and spiritual maturity of each other.

*God has gifted you for the local assembly.* You may have heard this statement that 10% of the people in church do 90% of the work. Whether or not it is even true, it is clear in Scripture that God's intention for a church member is not to be a passive partaker. In fact God has gifted each of us for the purpose of serving the church (see 1 Pet 4:10–11, Eph 2:10.) In Eph 2:10, Paul states the purpose to which we have been redeemed: to do good works. In 1 Pet 4:10–11, Peter adds that it is actually the proper use of the grace God has given you to use your gift for the benefit of others within the local assembly. This doesn't necessarily mean that you will use your skill as a musician each Sunday or mid-week service but it does mean that you actively seek to do good to others within the assembly you are in. Consider asking your pastor about the ways you can specifically use your gifts in the church.

*God has called you to serve in the local assembly.* This manifest itself in different ways according to Scripture. Romans 14:19 commands that we seek peace and mutual upbuilding; 1 Cor 12 & 14 calls us to edify and build each other up in the faith; Eph 4:25–32 places the responsibility of serving, warning, loving and encouraging those in the church. Hopefully you get the point. We are obligated to the church we meet regularly with and must steward these God given responsibilities well. Think of your church. How are you currently stewarding your obligation to the people you are joined to?

The years you are committing to your education will be among the most formative moments of your life. It is an honorable obligation you have put yourself under as a student studying music. Yet all of your obligations, though important, are not as vital as your commitment to the local church. It is a means of God's grace we share in to become more like Christ. It's a stewardship we all been given. Cherish it with all your heart as the Father cherishes it with all of His.

### Helpful Resources:

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the content of this article I must credit to the teaching of Dr. David Doran pastor/teacher of InterCity Baptist Church in Allen Park, MI; my pastor, Jay Searcy of Grace Baptist Church in Hamtramck, MI; and Aaron Coffey a dear mentor and friend whose years of influence and ministry partnership instilled in me an invaluable love for the local church.

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