



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.
Lakeland, FL 33803

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

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What About Hand Clapping as Part Of New Testament Worship? (Part 1)

Brian R. Kenyon

Occasionally, questions arise about certain practices in worship assemblies of some local churches of Christ. One such practice involves the use of hand clapping during congregational singing and/or rounds of applause after certain songs are sung. The practice of hand clapping in worship assemblies must be evaluated by its conformity or non-conformity to the God-authorized pattern of worship (cf. John 4:24). Does hand clapping give advantage to Scriptural worship or is it an unauthorized innovation in worship?

The Scripturalness of hand clapping in worship (like any other practice in worship) is really quite simple to determine. The problem to many people does not lie in understanding what the Bible teaches concerning worship, but in accepting that truth. The apostle Paul wrote, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). To do something "in the name of the Lord" is to do something in accordance with the Lord's will, purpose, nature, and authority (cf. Matthew 21:9; 23:29; Acts 2:38; 10:48; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 6:10; Ephesians 5:20). This means that people must know the Lord's will, purpose, nature, and authority, and that they must act upon that knowledge if they are to do something "in the name of the Lord."

Only Two Possible Sources of Authority

Hand clapping in worship, therefore, is simply a question of Bible authority. By what authority do people employ hand clapping as a means of giving praise to God? In answering this question, people must realize there are only two possible sources of authority: "from heaven" (God-given) or "of men" (man-made) (cf. Matthew 21:23-27). Every religious practice, including hand clapping, is either authorized by God or it is not—there is no middle ground! If a practice of worship is authorized by God, then it can be done in a manner that pleases God and brings blessing to the worshiper. If a practice of worship is not authorized by God (i.e., man-made), then it can never be pleasing to God, and it must be abandoned and repented of if the worshiper is to receive spiritual blessing from God (cf. 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Luke 6:46).

Only Two Possible Sources of Authority

In answering the question of hand clapping in worship, we must ascertain what God-approved worship involves. Consider the statements made by Jesus to the Samaritan woman concerning worship: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship

Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). This passage teaches that worship consists of the proper attitude (“in spirit”), and the proper avenues (“in truth”). If the “right avenues” are pursued with an improper attitude, then the worship is not acceptable to God (cf. Isaiah 1:11-15; Amos 5:21-27; Matthew 6:5). If the right attitude is present, but the wrong avenues are pursued, then the worship is not acceptable to God (cf. Acts 17:22-23; Colossians 2:18-23). Thus, worship is an act or series of religious acts authorized by God, intentionally done by a faithful child of God with genuine love and reverence toward God.

To ascertain what acts are approved of God in worship, we must examine the total teaching of the New Testament regarding worship. When done so, the New Testament authorizes the Christian to sing (Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16), to pray (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:8), to teach (Acts 2:42; 20:7), to give on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and to partake of the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week (Acts 2:42; 20:7) as acts of worship. God requiring specific acts of worship should not be surprising because God-approved worship has always required specific action (cf. Genesis 22:5; Judges 7:15; 1 Samuel 1:19; 2 Samuel 12:20; Isaiah 66:23; Zechariah 14:16; Matthew 2:2; 15:25; Acts 8:27; 24:11; Revelation 3:9; 15:4). Only when we have the proper attitude (“in spirit”) and do the proper acts (“in truth”) can our worship be acceptable to God.

God’s Will Must Be Accepted

In answering the question of hand clapping in worship, we must accept what God has revealed as authorized acts of worship, not adding to His word nor subtracting from it (Galatians 1:6-9; Colossians 3:17; Revelation 22:18-19). Where does the New Testament authorize hand clapping in worship? To what authority do those who practice hand clapping in worship appeal? The truth of the matter is that there is as much authority in the New Testament for hand clapping in worship as there is for counting rosary beads, playing mechanical instruments of music, and/or snake-handling. The answer to the question of hand clapping in worship is really quite simple: there is absolutely no authority for it! Therefore, to practice hand clapping in worship is sinful, because it goes beyond what God has authorized (1 John 3:4; 2 John 9). Understanding this truth is simple, but accepting it seems to be quite difficult for some. Attention will now be turned to addressing attempted justifications of the practice.

Is Clapping Acceptable Because It Is Not Explicitly Condemned?

Some proponents of hand clapping in worship justify its practice by saying, “Well, the Bible doesn’t say you can’t do it.” This justification may seem reasonable, but further consideration must be given. What this attitude really says is, “All things not explicitly condemned in the Bible are acceptable to God.” In other words, unless the Bible says, “Thou shalt not,” we are free to practice anything. However, there are many things the Bible does not explicitly condemn. For example, where does the Bible say “Thou shalt not have a pope,” or “Thou shalt not use peanut butter and jelly for the Lord’s Supper”? It does not! How do the faithful know these things are wrong? They know because the Bible does not authorize them (cf. Colossians 3:17).

This same argument, when applied to music, would allow the mechanical instrument in worship. In fact, when pressed, proponents of hand clapping in worship, using this “Bible doesn’t say you can’t” argument, are forced to confess that mechanical instruments of music in worship are not sinful. They may say, “It would be sin for us to use them in our congregation, but we can’t condemn others. After all, the Bible does not say we can’t use them.”

The fact that silence of the Scriptures does not authorize is clearly seen in the Bible. The classic example concerns the priesthood of Christ. No where does the Old Testament explicitly say, “Thou shalt not have priests from the tribe of Judah.” To be consistent with their theory, proponents of hand clapping would have to say it would be acceptable for one from Judah to serve as priest under the Old Law. However, when informing his readers why Jesus could not serve as priest under the Old Law, the Hebrews writer declared, “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:14). Silence does not authorize! **To be continued**

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17)

PRAYER LIST

Current: Fran Gabaldon's surgery has been rescheduled for July 10. Richard Meadows from the N. Lkld church of Christ has been diagnosed with cancer. Gail Churikian (Steven Ford's mother) is not doing well.

Continual: Jim Turner (his cancer has returned, he has be admitted to the hospital) Sharon Mathis Washington (Health & family); Stacey Wilson (health); Debbie Bush (struggles); Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health).

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin, Helen Perrin, bettye bolding, Sharon Roy, Nellie Anderson

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!
[Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.](#)

Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes

Time to sign up if you want to participate in this great program this year! We also need adults to sign up to mentor and help in various areas! We can't do this without your support! Sign up in the notebook by the doorway into the auditorium.

See Becky Sheumaker with any questions!



There will be an important Bible class teachers meeting on Sunday, July 28, at 5:00 pm. All who are willing to teach for the fall quarter are requested to be there. We would benefit greatly from your input.

Fellowship Meal to Welcome The Ford Family

Sunday, July 28 following the morning service
 Bring food for your family and to share with visitors!
Team 3 will be in charge of the kitchen and clean up.



Thank You!!

Dear Family,
 All of your love and acts of kindness these last few years are invaluable to our being able to go on. As always the prayers have been and are vital to help us all have strength and faith. We have been so encouraged by the cards, calls, visits and food. And as always, always, the prayers. Thank you and continue to keep us in your prayers.

~ Carlene, Nancy and the family of Bill Long ~

Scheduled to Serve in July

Designated Elder	David Anderson
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Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Announcements	Brian Kenyon
Song Leader / Prayer	Landon Willcut
Devotional / Invitation	Stacey Paulin
Closing Prayer	Paul Sweeney

Sunday, July 14, 2024

10:30 am Sermon	David Stearsman
"Seizing the Time" (Ephesians 5:14-17)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Andre Medley
"What Does It Profit a Man?" (Matt. 16:26)	

Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	McCarter's
Song/Pray before class	Kyle Bingle
Announcements (both)	Frank Hamby
Song Leader (both)	David Williams
Prayer / Bible reading	George Beals
Lord's Table (both)	George Davis
Closing Prayer	Terrance Dindy
Open/Close Building	Bobby Sheumaker
Attendance Cards	Declan
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix

Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Olivia/Ingrid
Announcements	Frank Hamby
Song Leader	David Williams
Prayer / Bible reading	Paul Sweeney
Closing Prayer	Mike Van Allen

Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Announcements	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Kyle Faneuf
Devotional / Invitation	Bobby Sheumaker
Closing Prayer	Cam' Ron Bailey

How We Are Giving

June 23	\$5,170.00
June 30	\$7,510.00
July 7	\$7,469.15
Contribution Average	\$6,850.30
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
 Romans 12:15

Freedom

The dictionary describes freedom as “ the power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint”. We recently celebrated a holiday in our country that recognizes that we live in a free country and enjoy these privileges- or do we? Last month I was made aware of a situation that has me wondering- are we really free? As Christians we are made free in Christ (Gal. 5:1) when we obey Him and put Him on in baptism, so yes we are free. In this country however, we may soon see that we are not free from the sin that is all around us and wants to persecute us for what we believe. A young girl I know was recently fired from her job at Walmart because she simply wrote a Bible verse reference on a poster that was celebrating “Pride” month, on which others were writing their approval of such. Satan must be ecstatic to see something like this happen. We are told in scripture that we WILL suffer persecution as a Christian (2 Timothy 3:12), yet most of us have not seen much of this in our lives but I’m afraid it is getting to the point where we are going to see more of this. Are we prepared? We must arm ourselves with the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11-18) and be ready. Are our children prepared to stand up for what’s right or are we allowing the world to bombard them with propaganda that is influencing them otherwise? Deuteronomy 11:19 tell us “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thing house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest dow, and when thou risest up. We may not always live in a free country, but as long as we stay faithful to Christ we will be a free people. Romans 6:22 tells us that we have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. I don’t know about you but being a slave of God sounds a whole lot better than being a slave to Satan. Like Daniel in the Old Testament who continued serving God even when the law of the land forbad it, we may one day be put in that same situation where we must choose to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). I pray that you and I never have to experience that but if so I pray that we will be strong enough to stand for what we know is right. Let us continue to do what we can to share the good news of freedom in Christ (Luke 4:18) and pray for those in authority in our country (1 Tim 2:1-6). As we continue to enjoy the freedom we have in Christ (and in this country for the most part) let us never forget that freedom is not free, it came with a cost; many had to die for our country to be free and the perfect Son of God had to die for our freedom from sin.



Orange St church of Christ
 Auburndale, Fl
 Saturday, August 3, 2024
 9:00 am- 12:00 pm
 Lunch will be provided!

Make plans now to attend!

FSOP Ladies Class
 Taught by Susan Stearsman
 ABIDE IN HIM
 Study of First John
 July 23, 2024
 7:00 PM



www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com
 Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.

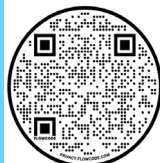


**South Florida Avenue
 CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1807 South Florida Avenue
 Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

**" The Lord takes pleasure in those who
 fear Him,
 In those who hope in His mercy"
 Psalm 147:11**



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.