

**Biblical Character Guidelines for Worship Leadership II**

*Spiritual & Musical Qualifications Unique For Levites – Singers & Musicians*

1. **Appointed.** The Old Testament role of the priest was to minister before the Lord (offer sacrifices) on behalf of the people.
  - a. **God choose the Levites:** “*the Levites shall be mine*” (Numbers 3:12)
  - b. *Number 3:5 Then the Lord said to Moses, 6 “Call forward the tribe of Levi, and present them to Aaron the priest to serve as his assistants. 7 They will serve Aaron and the whole community, performing their sacred duties in and around the Tabernacle.\* 8 They will also maintain all the furnishings of the sacred tent,\* serving in the Tabernacle on behalf of all the Israelites. 9 Assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons. They have been given from among all the people of Israel to serve as their assistants. 10 Appoint Aaron and his sons to carry out the duties of the priesthood. But any unauthorized person who goes too near the sanctuary must be put to death.”*
    - i. The job of the Levites was to serve and protect the Tabernacle – the place of God’s presence, the place of worship. Those of us in worship ministry today have a Levitical role and function to **serve and protect** the place of God’s presence.
  - c. The Levites had a special place of ministry unto the Lord.  
*Numbers 8: 14 In this way, you will set the Levites apart from the rest of the people of Israel, and the Levites will belong to me. 15 After this, they may go into the Tabernacle to do their work, because you have purified them and presented them as a special offering. 16 “Of all the people of Israel, the Levites are reserved for me. I have claimed them for myself in place of all the firstborn sons of the Israelites; I have taken the Levites as their substitutes.*
  - d. It is important to note that **the Levites did not appoint themselves**, they were chosen by God. Because of the finished work of Christ (book of Hebrews), all believers are now priests unto the Lord. However, one should not be self-appointed to the worship ministry.
  - e. Unique aspects of the Levites history\*:
    - i. The name Levi means “a joining” or “joined”. This could mean joined together to be joined to the service of the Lord. It indicates – no “solo acts”.
    - ii. Original ancestor of Israel’s priests (on of 12 sons/tribes of Jacob/Isarael)
    - iii. Depicted as savage and merciless in Genesis 34:25-31 when they annihilated the male population of Shechem to avenge the rape of their sister Dinah. (Gen 34:25-31)
    - iv. Also known as “instruments of wrath”.
    - v. Jacob (Levi’s father) spoke harshly of him rather than blessing him (Genesis 49:5-7).

- vi. Moses ordered the Levites to kill all the people who had sinned by making the golden calf. The killed 3000 men (brothers) that day. (Exodus 32:28)
- vii. Levites were the lowest of the three orders of Israel's priesthood.
- viii. The tribe of Levi was chosen because they were the only tribe that stood with Moses when the people sinned by making the golden calf.

*Source: "Facing The Wall" Don Potter, p 48, Potterhaus Publisher*

## 2. Loyal

- a. The Sons of Zadok
  - i. *"The sons of Zadok were Levites that proved themselves to be faithful to the Lord. As a result of their faithfulness, they were allowed to come near to the presence of God and minister to him"* Potter , p31
  - ii. Faithful to David, "the Lords anointed" (II Samuel 15:24)
  - iii. *Meanwhile, David stationed Zadok the priest and his fellow priests at the Tabernacle of the Lord at the place of worship in Gibeon, where they continued to minister before the Lord. 1 Chronicles 16:39*
- b. David recognized the Levites as being the only ones who should carry the ark. "None ought to carry the ark but the Levites..." (*1 Chronicles 15:2*). It is important to note that failure to follow this guideline resulted in disaster and death in 1 Chronicles 13.
- c. Application: Those of us in the Levitical role are to be loyal to God's purposes and to the leaders He anoints for His purposes.
  - i. Anointed – compare David to Saul
  - ii. Zadok recognized the Lord was with David, not Saul
- d. Later in Israel's history we see that the "Sons of Zadok" stayed loyal and they alone were allowed to minister unto the Lord. (Ezekiel 44:15-16)

## 3. Dedicated.

- a. **The Levites loved and cared for God's house.** Part of the Levites assignment was to camp around the north, south, east and west of the tabernacle (*Numbers 3:15, 23, 29, 35*). Here we see that the Levites lived closer to the tabernacle of Moses than any of the other tribes.
- b. *"These are the ones David put in charge of the music in the house of the Lord after the ark came to rest there. They ministered with music before the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, until Solomon built the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. They performed their duties according to the regulations laid down for them."* (*1 Chronicles 6:31-32*)
- c. Application: Today's "Levites" should demonstrate a special love for God's house by being:
  - i. Available – serving is a priority, sometimes this is not convenient.
  - ii. dependable
  - iii. punctual, on time

**4. Excellent.**

- a. Musically trained in a wide range of applications: Asaph's music ministry included singing, percussion, orchestration, brass, strings, composition (songwriting), prophesying and teaching - *1 Chronicles 15:19 16:7, 37-42; 25:1; Psalms 73-83*
- b. Musical virtuosity: Excellence in musical technique was a hallmark of the Tabernacle of David. "*Kenaniah, the head Levite, was chosen as the choir leader because of his skill.*" *1 Chronicles 15:22*
- c. The musicians in David's Tabernacle were "instructed in the songs of the Lord" and were "cunning": *1 Chronicles 16:4 25:6*
- d. We are exhorted to play unto the Lord "Skillfully" with "cunning": *Psalms 33:3; Psalm 137:5*
- e. Musical Literacy: The Levites did more than just play music, they recorded it by writing it down; that is why we have the book of Psalms today. (*1 Chronicles 16:4*)
- f. In David's day, the Levites were the only Hebrews who could read or write. A practical application today would be for musicians & singers to develop their music reading skills.
- g. Application – practice your skills, take lessons, continually try to improve. This is the lesson Jesus taught in “the parable of the talents” (Mathew 25:14-20).

**5. Able to Teach**

- a. *They (the Levitical priests) are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish (or discern) between the unclean and the clean” Ezekiel 44:23*
- b. Worship is spiritually formative – it teaches us about God. It has pedagogical (or educational, teaching) aspect to it.
- c. Application: you gotta be committed to learn about worship and pass it on.
- d. *1 Chronicles 25:7-8, all trained, chosen by lot*

**6. Lead the sacrifice of praise.**

- a. The writer of Hebrews admonishes Christians to offer the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15), a revelation received earlier by David (Ps. 51:15-16, Ps. 69:30-31)
- b. Drawing near to God and calling others to come was, and is, the role of the Levites then and now
- c. The Levites served David in his time. Now through the finished work of Christ as our ‘high priest’ (see Hebrews 7:11-17) the Levites of today serve Jesus.

- d. Being called to serve the Lord and faith in the restorative work of Christ is what qualifies you to be a modern Levite.

**7. Offer spontaneous and prophetic worship.**

- a. Similar to the cantor
- b. Know the Word of God – “word of God in – word of God out”
  - i. Tehillah – the sung word of the Lord
- c. Often the Bible shows spontaneous response of worship to the presence of the Lord
- d. Prayer, intercession, petition
  - i. Tephillah – the sung intercessory prayer sung in the spirit
- e. Colossians 3:16: “*Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. **Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.** 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.*”

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