Commitment…The Scary Word by Sheri Gould

Commitment.

Seems to be a scary word these days doesn't it? It kind of appears to me like commitment, or lack thereof, is a very common thread of discussion in the church today. I work with hundreds of worship leaders every year and this theme—lack of commitment- is prevalent among those who serve in the local church. I would like to venture into this territory and make a case for why we need to be committed not just as people, but as singers.

Committed to the Cause

Most of you who are reading this article are serving in the trenches of your local church. When I was in college so many years ago, I remember hearing it said that ANY gig was better than a 'church' gig. Why? Because it was all volunteer. The term volunteer implied—less than committed. Moreover, there's the underlying, unspoken aspect of no enforcement. Even if you got the always dreaded junior high school gig, you could at least punish your less than committed student through a variety of means-a flunking grade being one of them. Pretty much any musical venture you might choose to get involved with will require some sort of real commitment. If you break your commitment, there will be some sort of retribution.

Except in the church

With church involvement, we tend to feel we have no "right" to require any kind of real commitment. We feel ecstatic just to have warm bodies most of the time. Well, I propose that there is an error in that kind of thinking. We need to realize that what we do in the music ministry at church has less to do with people and more to do with God. In other words, our commitment is to GOD more than it is just our fellow man. Scripture has much to say about honoring the commitments we make to God.

Committed to Each Other

Although our primary commitment is to our Lord when we make a decision to get involved with our music ministry at church, we are also making a commitment to our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you are involved in any kind of a team, you know that when one part of the team is missing, the team doesn't function as well—sometimes it can't function at all! When we have any kind of a vocal group, the focus on getting our parts right, balanced, blended and tight requires all members to be present. It's impossible otherwise to achieve those objectives.

Time is of the essence in most of our busy lives. This is all the more reason why we need to be committed to our teams. When 4 out of 5 people show up for a rehearsal, it ends up costing those 4 people a lot of wasted time. Invariably, things that are learned will have to be re-learned once the missing party does show up, to take his or her part into consideration now. This is so inconsiderate toward your leader and team members. No one has time to waste.

I like to encourage worship leaders to strive for excellence in all they do. I'd like to encourage you as a singer to do so as well. I like to encourage worship leaders to require commitment of their team members. I even suggest a covenant agreement between all team members, renewable each year. I also suggest to team leaders to audition for their worship teams every year. This helps to keep people on their toes. There are far too many people on worship teams today who feel they have a "right" to be there.

They've forgotten that it's a privilege to serve. An audition each year would help to remind them. It also gives others in the congregation the opportunity to serve. Too many churches have given off the persona that the worship team is a private club or clique that is nearly impossible to break into. This would help to alleviate that problem.

Committed to Your Voice

I also find that many members of worship teams don't take the development of their own voice, or their musicianship very seriously either. I think this is another waste. We have so much to gain personally from personal growth of any kind, but in this case we can positively affect so many people by getting committed to being a better singer or a better musician in general.
One of the benefits of learning more about one's own voice is the health and longevity of your voice. There are many "dangers" lurking out there in the world of singing, many of them wanting to steal your beautiful voice and make it raspy, hurting and no longer useful for the kingdom of God! But this need not be the case. With a little of the right information and application, many of those dangers are easily averted. Additionally, with a little commitment to working out, your voice can become stronger, more beautiful and gain an increase in range. If every singer on your team took the time to personally work on their own voice and their own musicianship (not to mention their own parts!) the team as a whole would grow and benefit. In turn, your congregation would feel the benefit as well.

The Price of Commitment

Being committed to anything requires paying a price of some sort. When I committed my life to my husband I paid the price of "forsaking all others" and so did he. Not a bad deal at all for me actually, I'm so glad we did. We could never have the level of intimacy we have in our marriage if we hadn't. It's a price that many people today aren't willing to make. Committing to a worship team (or bettering your voice) will undoubtedly mean forsaking other activities and this may be too high a price for some. Many blessings await those who are willing. Those are the ones I want on my team, how about you?