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Welcome to Praise Choir

Dear Fellow Worship Leaders,

Singing God's praise is a tremendous privilege and an awesome responsibility. It is an amazing truth that as we lift up the name of Jesus, we, too, get lifted up in the process. We were created for praise. The purpose for our existence is to glorify God and to bring Him pleasure. When we are engaged in that prime directive we enjoy experiencing the highest fulfillment, satisfaction, and pleasure in our lives.

Like the Old Testament priests, we are responsible for handling holy things as we lead in worship. We are charged with presenting the name of Christ to believers and unbelievers alike from week to week, knowing that if He be lifted up He will draw all men to Himself. Praise is one of the most powerful evangelistic tools we have been given. D.L. Moody, the great evangelist, used to say that there is more said in the Bible about praise than about prayer, and that music and song not only accompanied all Scripture revivals, but were essential in deepening spiritual life. Moody went on to say:

We owe some of our best hymns to seasons like those, when in family and church, in the factory and street, the great truths of the gospel are heard in song. Singing does at least as much as preaching to impress the Word of God upon people's minds. During the forty years since God first called me, the importance of praise expressed in song has grown upon me.

What a powerful realization from a mighty preacher who shook two continents for God. Dr. George Frederick Pentecost, an associate of Moody and his song leader, Ira Sankey, said this:

I am profoundly sure that among the divinely ordained instrumentalities for the conversion and sanctification of the soul, God has not given a greater, besides the preaching of the gospel, than the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. I have known a hymn to do God's work in a soul when every other instrumentality has failed. I have seen vast audiences melted and swayed by a single hymn when they have been unmoved by a powerful presentation of the gospel from the pulpit.

If that is true, and I believe it is, then we are responsible to do the best job we possibly can in presenting the gospel in song from Sunday to Sunday. That's why we work hard each week setting high standards in attendance, musicianship, and spirituality. Lives are at stake. The quality of our musical presentation on the Lord's Day may be the difference between heaven and hell for some dear soul.

Thank you for lending us the song of your life that we might be more effective in offering to God a worthy sacrifice of praise, edifying the church, magnifying the Savior, and exalting Jehovah God.

Sincerely yours,

John Gage

TEN KEYS TO BECOMING A LOVING AND GRACIOUS PRAISE CHOIR MEMBER

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

- 1. We show our love for one another** when we encourage one another and never criticize anyone.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

"But encourage one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13).

"Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it" (James 4:11).

"The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4).

- 2. We show our love for one another** when we ignore people's mistakes—musical or otherwise. When someone misses a note or a rhythm don't turn around to see who it was. Don't laugh at or make fun of anyone. Don't make any disparaging comment under your breath.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praising and cursing. My brothers, this should not be"
(James 3:9-10).

"He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends"
(Proverbs 17:9).

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love"(Ephesians 4:2).

3. We show our love for one another when we look our best. A large part of our effectiveness in delivering our message is our appearance. Take our clothing guidelines seriously. It is important for us to look our best every time we sing. Every nationally known and respected church choir makes great effort to honor God in their appearance and to go the extra mile in looking like a coordinated ensemble. We are the recording choir on some of LifeWay Worship's best selling choir books. Thousands see and hear us sing each week here at home and around the world. God has seen fit to honor us by thrusting us onto the national stage. We need to show our gratitude by looking the part. Take a godly pride in our choir looking its best.

"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more"
(Luke 12:48).

"And the Levites who were the singers...clothed in white linen...praised the LORD, saying: "For He is

good, For His mercy endures forever"
(from 2 Chronicles 5:11-13).

- 4. We show our love for one another** when we don't personally confront anyone about their clothing or try to enforce choir policies on our own. If you feel something needs to be addressed with an individual, tell the director or the choir president in private so as not to embarrass anyone. They will prayerfully minister to that person in the most appropriate way.

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? (Matthew 7:1-3).

- 5. We show our love for one another** when we consider ourselves to be the host or hostess of our choir as if we were welcoming people into our own home. Make everyone feel welcomed and wanted. Invite new people to sit by you. Saved seats tell new people that they are not welcome and imply that you do not want to be their friend. This is the single biggest reason we hear from past choir members as to why they no longer sing with us.

"So Boaz said, 'Come aside, friend, sit down here.' So he came aside and sat down"(Ruth 4:1).

"A man who has friends must himself be friendly"
(Proverbs 18:24).

6. We show our love for one another by not talking during rehearsal.

"Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips"(Psalm 141:3).

"Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles"(Proverbs 21:23).

7. We show our love for one another by respecting other people's property. If you find music missing from your folder, ask our librarians for assistance. Don't take music out of other people's folders. Doing so only compounds the problem.

"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise"(Luke 6:31).

8. We show our love for one another by being on time. Punctuality is not holding others back with our inadequacies; it is a form of reverence which respects the time of others, and acts quickly when God and others call on us. It is realizing that time is important and that other people's time is valuable. Time is a treasure and an investment that pays off in eternity. We are not to waste or take advantage of other people's time. We are to strive to do our best with all that God has given us, including our time and the time of others.

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too"(Philippians 2:3-4).

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:15-16).

9. We show our love for one another by staying for the entire rehearsal which includes our technical rehearsal in the auditorium.

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36).

10. We show our love for one another by not grumbling, griping, or complaining, but by expressing our gratitude for what God is doing in our lives through our circumstances.

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault" (Philippians 2:14-15).

"Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves" (John 6:43).

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:18-19).

I believe with all my heart, that if we will prayerfully put into practice these ***Ten Keys to Being a***

Loving and Gracious Praise Choir Member, we will create a warm and welcoming atmosphere that will help us attract and keep all the new folks that God will send us in the days ahead.

WEDNESDAY REHEARSAL INFORMATION

STEPS FOR ENROLLING AS A NEW MEMBER

Anyone who attends Valley Baptist and is 18 years of age or above may take steps to become a choir member. A prospective member attends a rehearsal at 6:00 on Wednesday night, and is given instructions prior to rehearsal by the choir secretary or a choir representative at a table in the hallway just outside the choir room. The prospective member then is introduced to the appropriate section leader, and sings through the rehearsal with the choir. When the choir goes on stage for sound check, the prospective member may either come to the Worship Center to listen, or may be dismissed, at their discretion. They are encouraged to come listen to the technical rehearsal in the Worship Center. Within a few days, a choir handbook will be given to the prospective member, and at the next rehearsal they will meet with their section leader ten minutes prior to rehearsal for further instructions, clarification, and specific assignments. As soon as seating and music is assigned, the person becomes a CHOIR MEMBER.

CHOIR ASSIGNED SEATING

Each choir member is assigned to a seat in their section. This seat will be used for Wednesday night rehearsals, Sunday morning services and special services.

REHEARSALS

Choir rehearsals are held every Wednesday evening from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Choir Room at the west end of the Sanctuary. You will be notified of any special or additional

rehearsals.

Although the choir is a family and needs time for fellowship and sharing, please keep talking to a minimum during rehearsal.

Also, no texting unless you have an extreme emergency.

Each member is asked to assume personal responsibility for hearing and following directives from the podium and for making sure that the rehearsal experience is both enjoyable and profitable for everyone. Our policy is that you do not save seats for anyone, so that if we have new people come in they will feel welcome anywhere they sit.

Each Wednesday during choir we will have a corporate prayer time. Prayer request cards are available for you to write your prayer request on and give to an officer. They will be read during the prayer time and also given to John Gage. This lets him know your prayer needs and any information he may need (i.e., hospital, surgery, etc.).

ATTENDANCE

Excellent attendance is critical to our success as a choir. Our expectation is that every choir member attends *every* scheduled Praise Choir rehearsal and performance. If you must be absent because of illness, vacation, etc., then *you* must call your section leader to let them know. You should let them know *before* the absence takes place if at all possible. You can find your section leader's phone number and email address in the choir handbook.

If you miss twice in a row and your section leader hasn't heard from you, then they will call to see if you are okay and if there is a need for prayer or ministry from the choir on your behalf.

"Those who have been given a trust must prove that they are faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2 NIRV). Faithfulness in attendance is one very important key to pleasing God as a worship leader.

FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

Each time we meet on Wednesdays and Sundays we will get to know each other better and build friendships. Our social committee will provide social events to help our families to become better acquainted as well. These will be scheduled throughout the year. All up to date info will be provided each week in our “CHOIR NOTES”.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Each choir member is assigned a folder number and two folders (a performance and a rehearsal folder) for their use. The folders are kept current by the Choir Librarian with new books and songs being added and completed music removed. The folders are in numerical order and located in the Music Library for the men and in the Choir room for the ladies. Please make sure you pick up the correct folder assigned to you. **Do not use any other folder.** If you need help, see the Librarian.

PERFORMANCE MUSIC

Our Librarian will place a hymn sheet and the Sunday morning music in your performance folder for you.

The performance folder should only contain the music to be sung in the next service and the hymn sheet. If you take your Sunday hymn sheet home for the following service, please remember to bring it back. We will not be able to replace this on Sunday mornings.

REHEARSAL MUSIC

Choir members are allowed and encouraged to take their music home when extra practice time is necessary. A check-out sheet is located in the back of each folder where members can list what music they are taking. Please fill this out every time you take music from your folder as the Librarian will need this information in order to do their job properly. You should be

responsible to bring music back to choir. We do not have enough extra copies to give people that do not bring music from home, so please remember to bring it back.

**DO NOT TAKE MUSIC FROM ANOTHER FOLDER
DO NOT TAKE FOLDERS HOME**

LOCKERS

Lockers will be assigned to the ladies to store purses each **Wednesday and Sunday**. Ladies are strongly encouraged to use the lockers that are provided. This will ensure that their belongings are safe. Lockers are assigned by choir secretary.

CHILDCARE

Child care is provided on Wednesday evening during choir rehearsal, and for any extra rehearsal that is needed for special performances.

WORSHIP DRESS CODE FOR LEADING WORSHIP ON SUNDAY MORNING

For the first time, thousands of people here in Kern County and across America who have never experienced worship at Valley Baptist Church now have the opportunity to do just that through the Internet. It's important to our effectiveness as worship leaders to look our best as we represent our church to this vast new audience.

Since we do not wear robes or uniforms on Sunday morning, this dress code will help us unify our look. It will also help those who see us for the first time on the Internet to get a sense of who we are and whether or not they would be comfortable in attending our worship services. By giving careful attention to our appearance we show those who watch us each week that we respect them and that we are concerned with excellence in everything we do. We want to look sharp and attractive without seeming "stuffy" or "formal." We believe the best way to achieve this goal is to adopt a dress code that some have

described as “business” or “dressy casual.”

With this in mind, we will observe the following dress code on Sunday mornings.

Ladies:

- Dresses or skirts must come below the kneecap when standing due to the height of the stage and choir loft. Hemlines look shorter from the congregation.
- Long dress slacks or pant suits are allowed in the choir and orchestra area. No cargo or capris.
- Solid colors are ALWAYS best – try to keep solid color shirts and blouses available.
- No bold, busy, flowery or polka dot prints.
- No cleavage or bare midriffs. Shirts should be long enough to tuck in. No sleeveless or short cap sleeve tops.
- No tight fitting clothing. Tops and pants need to be LOOSE fit. Spandex fabric should not be worn. No skinny pants.
- Error on the side of too modest or too dressy. If in doubt, don’t wear it. Clothes considered modest in the secular world may not be modest for a worship leader.
- No pants if you are featured on the platform as a soloist, or sing in an ensemble or praise team.
- No blue jeans.
- Stay away from solid white which glares on camera under the bright lights. You may wear white as long as it is covered by a dark jacket.
- No hats or caps or any accessories that draws attention to the wearer.
- Make sure you have color on your face – especially blush and lipstick. The lights on the stage will wash out your face. Jewelry should be kept simple.

Men:

- Short sleeved crew neck or collared knit shirts must be worn with a jacket. No short sleeve shirts without a jacket.

- Shirt and tie with a suit or dress slacks and a blazer may be worn.
- Long sleeve shirts may be worn without a jacket and pants should be dress style.
- No blue jeans and no cargos.
- Solid color pants and solid color shirts are always best.
- Stay away from solid white which glares on camera under the bright lights. You may wear white as long as it is covered by a dark jacket.
- Dress shoes should be worn – no athletic shoes.
- No hats or caps or any accessories that draws attention to the wearer.

DRESS FOR SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

Candlelight Service or other special event—

For our special events such as Christmas and Easter, etc. we have a formal attire dress.

Ladies - Blouse and long black skirt, black hose, black shoes.

Men – Black shirt, tie and slacks.

You will be asked to purchase this uniform. You may do this at the time of enrollment. You will be asked for a deposit and then the order will be placed.

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

7:30AM	Rehearse in Choir Room
7:50AM	Orchestra moves to stage, Choir gets ready
8:00AM	Service begins
8:15AM	Choir exits stage & returns to choir room for refreshments
9:10AM	Choir rehearses in Choir Room
9:20AM	Choir gets ready
9:30AM	Service begins
9:45AM	Choir exits stage

SUNDAY MORNING PROCEDURES

EAR BUDS AND RECEIVERS

Ear buds (located in performance folders) and receivers (located in the Choir room and library) are used when singing in the Choir loft, at rehearsal on Wednesday nights, and Sunday mornings. Please see the **music secretary** with any problems or questions regarding the audio equipment. We have provided ear buds for you. **If you lose the ear buds, you will be asked to replace them. The cost is \$10.00.**

Do not take ear buds or receivers home.

CHOIR LOFT PARTICIPATION

As worship leaders, the eyes of the congregation are directed towards us as we enter and exit from the Choir Loft.

Our goal is to use our music in the loft as little as possible. Learn to use the video monitor to get your lyrics and vocal cues. Our goal is to have 100+ choir members in attendance each service.

DIRECTING THE FOCAL POINT

Since we are in a position where all eyes in the congregation are directed toward us, it is important for us to direct our focal point in the following manner:

- When performing, our focus should be on the director.
- All other times our focus should be directed toward the person who is either singing or speaking.
- Always look happy and supportive. Eventually you will be on the screen. Be animated and participate with your whole heart and smile, smile, smile!

EXITING THE PLATFORM

After completing the choir portion of the worship service, everyone will leave at the same time. **Exiting the Choir Loft should always be done in a quiet manner that will not**

distract the congregation. Please use discretion when you have to leave from the bottom stairs. Do so as quickly as you can. Try not to bring attention to yourself when exiting. There will be other performers coming onto the stage from this direction AND the audience sees everything!

Worship Service and Sunday School

You are encouraged to attend a worship service and Sunday School class on Sunday mornings. Sitting under the preaching of the Word is a vital and necessary part of spiritual growth. Small group Bible study through the Sunday School is an exciting enhancement to your personal growth. Sunday School is an opportunity to meet others outside of your ministry in an accountable, Bible-centered fellowship. It is not a problem in any of the classes to come in late or leave early from your Sunday School class due to Choir.

Besides enhancing your own walk with God, your Sunday School participation also gives you the opportunity to be an ambassador for Praise Choir to your class. You can let your class know about upcoming events and special prayer requests. You can also be on the lookout for potential choir members!

PRAISE CHOIR OFFICER **POSITIONS/DESCRIPTIONS** **OFFICER ELECTIONS**

Officer nominations will take place during the first week of May of each year. The current choir president, vice-president, and Minister of Music will become the nominating committee and will prayerfully and carefully choose from the nominations a short list of possible candidates for each position. After necessary interviews and discussion, recommendations of specific candidates will be made to all the officers, who will at this point become the election committee. After discussion and a

vote to approve the candidates is made, the election committee will present to the choir the completed list of officers for the approval by a public vote.

PRESIDENT

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Meets with the Director on a regular basis to evaluate procedure, policy, operation, future needs and spiritual climate of the Choir.
- Makes announcements and welcome during choir rehearsal
- Acts as a liaison between the Choir and the Director and between Officers and the Director.
- Coordinates the efforts of the Choir Officers for special events and projects as well as week by week ministry.

REQUIREMENTS:

- One-year commitment
- Faithful attendance
- Respected as a leader, both musically and spiritually
- Must exhibit an attitude of spiritual maturity, optimism, creativity, encouragement and commitment

VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT ELECT

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Assists with Presidential duties as follows:

- Meets with the President on a regular basis to evaluate procedure, policy, operation, future needs and spiritual climate of the Choir.
- Assists section leader with New member orientation, every Wednesday, or as necessary.
- Fills in for President when he is away.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Two-year commitment

- Faithful attendance
- Respected as a leader, both musically and spiritually
- Must exhibit an attitude of spiritual maturity, optimism, creativity, encouragement and commitment

SECRETARY

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Greets and enrolls new members at the registration table
- After enrollment she will introduce the new member to the Librarian where she will assign folders and introduce to Section Leader
- Assists in tape sales/collection of monies
- Handles maintenance of audio receivers

REQUIREMENTS:

- Faithful attendance
- Must work well with people
- Friendly and outgoing
- Arrive 30 minutes early each week for pre-rehearsal set up

LIBRARIAN

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- In charge of the Choir Library and all music used by the Choir
- Assigns folders and music to new members
- Maintenance of music and the folders

REQUIREMENTS:

- Faithful attendance
- Must work well with people
- Friendly and outgoing
- Available to spend at least one or two mornings a week working in the Music Library

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Send appropriate cards to choir members who are hospitalized or people in need of prayer
- Sends birthday cards to all choir members
- Updates choir and director on anyone who may be in hospital or ill
- Coordinates food for funerals, when needed

REQUIREMENTS:

- Faithful attendance
- Must have a heart for benevolent ministries

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Help plan and coordinates all social events for the Choir
- Plans monthly birthday recognition
- Helps coordinate food for funerals along with Christian Ministries

REQUIREMENTS:

- Faithful attendance
- Must have a feel for social activities that increase choir cohesiveness

SECTION LEADERS

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Serve as a liaison with the Minister of Music and the President of the Choir
- Keep up with members of their Section and encourage faithful attendance
- Call any member who misses 2 times in a row if the cause is unknown
- Greets new members, makes introductions, and helps them get

acclimated and feel at home.

- Meets with visitors the 2nd week to go over choir procedures and have choir librarian assign music and seating.
- Make the Music Minister aware of any needs among their section members.
- Call all absentees to inform them when there are special rehearsals

REQUIREMENTS:

- Faithful attendance
- Respected as a leader, both musically and spiritually