

Innovation or Expedient?

When we sit in our pews this morning and lend our attention to the song leader we notice two, perhaps three objects that will assist him as he directs us in worship.

First, notice the microphone he sings into. The microphone was not used in the first century, nor is the use of a microphone specifically commanded in the Scriptures. Its use simply amplifies what the singer is singing; it does not add anything to the singing. The amplification allows all of us to hear him and follow his lead, which keeps the worship in order (I Cor. 14:40).

The second object to assist the song leader is the screen above his head, displaying the shaped notes and poetry. This too is not found in Scripture nor used in the first century, but its use also directs us, keeping us in order as we sing. The first two very rarely, if ever, are accused of being innovative.

The third object he could use is a pitch pipe. By definition, it is a small pipe which, when blown into, produces one or more pitches and is used chiefly for establishing the proper pitch in singing or in tuning a musical instrument. Sometimes the pitch pipe is confused with an instrument. The error with this comparison is that the pitch pipe or tuning fork does not operate during singing. It gives its pitch and then is silent. Occasionally, an argument is made that using the pitch pipe is the same as using an instrument. This argument ignores the fact that the command is to sing (Eph. 5:19). Singing is not done without pitch and Scripture does not limit how pitch is obtained. Using the pitch pipe does not violate the command, so it too allows us to worship in order.

Let us all join in as we lift our voices in true worship and praise to our Lord, the creator of the universe, from everlasting to everlasting.

For the elders,
Tony Williams