

Is Clapping in Church Sacrilegious?

Have you ever questioned whether you should clap when the worship team is done with its set? I know that in most Western churches, this is unheard of. But would you clap if you went to a concert and saw musicians play their hearts out with the same level of excellence and passion? Why do we separate the two? Why is it culturally acceptable outside of the church for people's talents to be celebrated, but inside the church, that would be seen as proud or stealing glory from God?

If you've ever visited us at Bethel Church you've probably been through the experience of someone getting up on stage to preach or lead worship, and immediately the crowd goes absolutely wild, stands and roars with applause. This experience is often culture shock to a lot of people who are visiting for the first time. In fact, most people consider applause in church to be sacrilegious, but it's a part of our culture here. It's ingrained in us, and if you've been here long enough, you know the drill and probably stand without even thinking twice. Why is this such a no-brainer at Bethel? Because we believe celebrating the glory in people actually celebrates the glory of God in them.

In a nutshell:

- Luke 14:11 says, "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
- 1 Peter 5:6 says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."
- James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."
- Humility is the process to exaltation. Remember Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death, and God highly exalted Him.

- God is a rewarder of those who humble themselves and seek Him.
- When God makes somebody great, you can bet that the person went through the door of humility.
- The point is that God wants to exalt people.
- When I first started to travel, I'd go to churches where they did a great job of worship, and I would stand up to cheer on the worship team. Usually I was met with awkward silence and side glances. There's an unspoken message in the church today that we don't want to give glory to someone for fear that it will take glory from God. As if His glory has a limit.
- God is the proudest Father in the stands. When we do something amazing, He wants everyone to see and celebrate it!

Celebrate Good Times, Come On!

So today, I want to encourage you to turn away from a religious mindset that may talk you into false humility. You have permission to fully shine God's glory in the world, and so do the people around you. The next time someone in the church does something amazing, let's remember that celebrating them is celebrating the workmanship of God. Let's be the kind of brothers and sisters who cheer each other on, encourage one another and delight in each other's gifts and talents the same way our Father would. Is celebration a part of your church culture? What about your family culture? I'd love to hear what you think in the comments. {eoa}

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