

IS THE ACT OF CLAPPING (APPLAUSE) AUTHORIZED IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH?

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As an authorized act of worship, or in any other connection or setting, applause (the clapping of the hands to show agreement or approval) is not mentioned in the New Testament. Webster defines “clap” as: “to strike together so as to produce a sharp percussive noise; to strike (the hands) together repeatedly usually in applause.” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, MA, p. 153). “Clap” is found nine times in the Old Testament (2 Kin. 11:12; Psa. 47:1). The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 665 informs us that in the previous cases the clapping of the hands is “an emphatic expression of joy;” usually having to do with victories in battle. But, Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* informs us that such clapping is never referred as an act of worship.

That certain well-meaning brethren in recent years have introduced clapping into the worship of the church of Christ proves only one thing at best—*that certain well-meaning brethren did it*. AND, THAT IS ALL IT PROVES! But, over the years well-meaning brethren have caused all manner of problems in the Lord’s body because they did not know or did not care to seek the authority of God’s Word for their beliefs and practices. The question is, where is the New Testament authority for the practice of hand-clapping or applause in the worship of God’s church? And, the answer to the preceding question is this—*there is no New Testament authority for it*. In view of the fact that we are to have New Testament authority for all we believe and practice (Col. 3:17) we ask, where is the *direct statement, example or implication* authorizing it? The answer is this—there is *no* direct statement, *no* example or *no* implication found in the New Testament authorizing hand clapping, stamping the feet, snapping fingers, clicking one’s dentures, whistling, cracking one’s knuckles, snorting, grunting, booing, squealing, humming and such like actions any more than there is for the use of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church. The previous answer satisfies everyone who loves the good Word of Christ, which Word manifests the Will of Christ on all matters religious and the standard by which all men will be blessed or condemned eternally on the great Judgment Day (John 12:48). *Frankly, what anyone else does or does not do in or out of the church regarding applause, et al., proves nothing other than the fact that they are willing to participate in, advocate and defend that for which they have no New Testament authority to do.*

“Amen” is found 126 times in the NT. It is employed to signify what was said or done as being reliable and true, valid and certain [Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 338 and Colin Brown, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 99]. A strongly said “Amen” is sufficient for Christians to signify their approval of anything done or said in the worship assembly of the church. Indeed, why would a child of God desire to say or do anything more? Surely it would only be because of one’s ignorance of or out-right rebellion to the authority of the Scriptures (God’s Will) that would cause one to go beyond saying “Amen” as an expression of public approval of, or agreement with

anything done in the worship assemblies of the Lord's church, along with all other sacred matters, such as expressing one's approval of a person's baptism into Christ for the remission of their sins (1 Cor. 14:16).~