

Basics of Singing

When we picture our Lord and Savior on the earth, we often think of His teaching moments, or private conversations. I wonder how often we think of Him as a singer. Yet the Scriptures reveal that Jesus did sing songs; After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26, Mt. 26:30). But more importantly, Jesus sang before God the Father: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You" (Hebrews 2:12), and "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name" (Romans 15:9).

We who have been members of the church a while forget what it might feel like when a visitor or new member finds out how much of our worship is in song. They get a song book, and may feel terrified that they are expected to sing along with us, especially since so many denominations today have lost congregational singing. But we want them to know how important a work it is to sing.

There is an important story about that loss of congregational singing that occurred in England centuries ago. There one of the Great Debates was how singing should occur. Many only wanted to sing Psalms of Scripture, while some wanted to sing hymns and spiritual songs as well (Eph. 5:19). A theologian named Isaac Watts waded into this debate by writing a very well known hymn. The second verse of that hymn is this: "*Let those refuse to sing, who never knew our God*". It is rather clear where he stood on this debate. Singing is a declaration to the worldly walls of Jericho that we are with the God who brings victory.

There are four thoughts we want visitors, new members and long time family to know about singing. We can call these things the fundamentals or basics of singing.

1. Singing pleases God

It is clear that singing pleases God. We are told that even nature, even the stars, sing praises to God. In the book of psalms alone there are 68 references of singing praise to God. There are the psalms of ascent, particular songs that pilgrims sang while travelling to Jerusalem. But in and among these songs there are prophecies of the songs that we, the redeemed of God, would one day sing. It is clear that God loves joyful singers; therefore, singing is something special for people who love God.

2. Singing teaches us important ideas

One of the purposes of singing in Colossians 3:16 is in teaching and admonishing one another. Singing offers a form of memorization unique to the human brain; we know this so well that all of our schools teach kids songs to memorize scholastic facts such as the alphabet or math formulas. Singing is an easy way to commit to memory Psalms, passages of the New Testament, or simply spiritual truths. Since the Holy Spirit dwells within us by Faith, and Faith comes by the Word of God, this work of singing brings the Spirit of God to dwell by Faith in a believer. Thus it makes sense that when we are commanded to sing songs, it is identified with being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b-19a "*but **be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs***" and Colossians 3:16 "***Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs***")

3. Songs use poetic language

For many, much of the poetic language of song can be confusing at first. There are expressions and terms that we grow familiar with, but the novice may find difficult to understand. When we sing about "Zion" or "Canaan's Land", it is really a reference to Heaven and eternal life. When we mention "The Story", we mean the Life of Jesus and the Gospel. Many songs are about "Sunlight"; it means the joy of those in

Christ. There are also ideas that might be confusing. Coming to the Cross or Calvary refers to repentance or conversion. We talk about crossing the Jordan river, which is symbolic of dying and entering our eternal reward. We call ourselves pilgrims, which refers to our lives here on earth being temporary.

4. Singing makes us better

Singing in general makes people feel better and be better. Consider this chart taken from a number of sources:

But it is not just the physical and mental results that are important. Singing makes us better Christians. We see this by statements and events in Scripture. Singing lifts our spirits (James 5:13) and express gratitude. Singing gives us a better mind when we are down (Acts 16:25). Singing is a spiritual work, that has spiritual results.



5. It does not matter how well you sing

Finally, we want everyone to know that this is not a performance. We are not in a competition for the best singers. Singing is an expression of the heart. In the KJV many of the Psalms are rendered "make a joyful noise", which refers to the voice making noise, NOT beautiful sounds. "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; break forth and sing for joy and sing praises" (Psalm 98:4). Too many wont sing because of their fear of sounding poor, yet this is a worldly and unworthy thought. God created your heart and voice to His pleasure; know that your heartfelt song is, to His ears, far better than the finest of singers.

What Is The Conclusion?

I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. 1 Corinthians 14:15