

**“I Will Sing Praises
Unto the Lord”**



Whatever Happened To Congregational Singing?

- Song leader chooses songs no one knows,
- Style issues confuse people (Fanny Crosby vs. contemporary),
- Architecture not always conducive to singing,
- Not enough people (70 in a building that seats 500),
- Too many new songs presented too fast,
- Monotonous worship leader,
- Musical instruments so loud that singing is overpowered,

Whatever Happened To Congregational Singing?

- Songs with little sense of order or progression,
- No expectation that the members sing,
- Choirs and orchestras to do their singing for them,
- Lack of spiritual zeal,
- Preachers and other leaders don't sing,
- Entertainment culture led them to expect to be entertained.
- They lost the truth that God is to be praised by the singing of His people.

The Precept Of Congregational Singing

- The Bible Precept
- The Messianic age is to be a time of singing praise.
 - Isa. 12:1-6 - “And in that day you will say: O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. 2 Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation. 3 Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation. 4 And in that day you will say: Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth. 6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”

The Precept Of Congregational Singing

- The Bible Precept
- Christians are commanded to sing to edify one another.
 - Eph. 5:19 - “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - Col. 3:16 - “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

The Precept Of Congregational Singing

- The Bible Practice
- Jesus and His apostles sang a hymn after the Passover in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.
 - Matt. 26:30 - “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
- Heavenly beings offer praise in song in the presence of God - Rev. 5:9-12, 7:9-12

The Precept Of Congregational Singing

- The Bible Principle

- First purpose of singing is to praise the Lord, inherent in the meaning of the word hymn.
- Second is to teach and admonish one another - Col 3:16
- Third is to be enriched by the Word and Spirit - Eph. 5:18-19
- Congregational singing reaches upward, outward, and inward.

The Practice Of Congregational Singing

- What song leaders can do:
 - Lead with enthusiasm,
 - Lead with familiarity.

The Practice Of Congregational Singing

- What the congregation can do:
- Sing with their understanding,
 - 1Cor. 14:15 - “I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.”
 - The words of the songs express praise and edification.
- Sing with their heart,
 - Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
 - We should allow the words of the song influence our emotions.

The Practice Of Congregational Singing

- What the congregation can do:
- Sing with their voice,
 - Psalm 51:14-15 - “Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.”
 - Col. 3:16 - “...teaching and admonishing one another...”
 - How can we teach each other and praise together if we do not hear one another?



The Practice Of Congregational Singing

- Sing with their presence.
 - Psalm 122:1 - “I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.”
 - Practice makes perfect; sing with others at every opportunity.

The Power Of Congregational Singing

- It is clear that those who walked with God in Old Testament times delighted in singing.
 - Psalm 146:1-2 - “Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! 2 While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.”
- Christians are taught to respond to the goodness of God similarly.
 - James 5:13 - “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”

The Power Of Congregational Singing

- Hymn comes from humnos, meaning “A celebration, a song in praise of, a religious ode.”
(Strong's 5215)
 - Acts 16:25 - “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”
 - Psalm 28:6-7 - “Blessed be the LORD, Because He has heard the voice of my supplications! 7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.”

The Power Of Congregational Singing

- We don't offer goats or doves; we offer song.
 - Heb. 13:15 - "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."
 - 1Peter 2:5 - "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Questions About Our Own Singing

- What limits do we put on where and when we sing?
- Do we make opportunities to sing at other times with others apart from worship, or even alone?
- Singing, like prayer, does not need to be scripted.
 - Psalm 34:1-3 - “I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.”

Questions About Our Own Singing

- What limits have we placed on our emotions in singing?
- Remember, singing involves the heart.
 - Matt. 22:37 - “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
 - Psalm 103:1 - “Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!”
- When it comes time to praise the Lord, it should not be done routinely or half-heartedly
 - “It is a great sign of mediocrity to praise always moderately.” (*Vauvenargues*)

Questions About Our Own Singing

- Do we understand what we are singing?
 - Some songs, though beautiful, can be so complex as to distract or hinder understanding.
 - Sometimes the pace of the song can be so fast that we don't absorb the meaning of the words.
 - Do we stress singing the melody perfectly to the point where we overlook the words?

Questions About Our Own Singing

- Have we lost the joy of singing?
 - Psalm 104:33 - “I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.”
 - Psalm 147:1 - “Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.”

Questions About Our Own Singing

- Which is more important when we sing: how we sound or how we feel?
- Are we really teaching and admonishing one another in song if we just whisper or mouth the words?
- Do we sing because we are happy, or are we happy because we sing?

Questions About Our Own Singing

- Do we sing praises to God by ourselves throughout the week?
- Does our family ever sing spiritual songs together (while traveling in the car, doing dishes, etc.)?
- Which is more unscriptural: singing with mechanical instruments, or singing without engaging the instrument of the heart?