

ascribe

A Series On Worship



PART FOUR

PSALM 95:1-2

A Joyful Noise : Why We Sing Together

Colossians 3:15-16

Gerald Harder

*O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the
rock of our salvation! Let us come
into his presence with
thanksgiving; let us make a joyful
noise to him with songs of praise!*



Throughout our Ascribe sermon series we have been gaining a deeper understanding of the true essence of worship, according to the one we are designed to worship. This week we are looking at the fact that, although our corporate worship singing is only a part of what a whole life of worship is all about, singing songs of praise together is indeed an important part of what worshippers do.

For those who have been part of a church tradition, this is seen as normal. But do we ever wonder why? And for those who are unfamiliar with 'worship services', singing together might seem just plain weird.

So, let's pose this question. Why do we, as the church, engage in singing together?

I. Singing Together Is Good for Us

The Bible tells us to sing, and to sing together. God tells us to sing together. And God doesn't require anything of us that isn't for our good. Many of the Psalms in particular, as well as other passages throughout the Bible instruct us to sing together – for joy – with gratitude in your hearts – to the Lord.

The Bible reveals the character and the heart of God because God wants us to know him. And as we get to know God more, we are more able 'to grasp how wide and long and high and deep' his love for us is, and this makes our hearts sing.

And science shows that singing together is good for us. There are proven benefits within our human chemistry that result from engaging in singing together, (Maybe not rapping together though??) that open us up to bonding with one another. In a place in history where loneliness and isolation are worse than ever, singing together is a proven antidote.

Throughout our lives it is wise to develop healthy habits. The habits we develop, shape and direct us. When we develop the habit of praising God in song, together with our church community, that shapes and directs our lives in the way God has designed.



II. Singing Together Encourages Others

Especially in our current context, when much of our lives is spent in isolation and many of our interactions revolve around digital communication, there is something both distinctive and attractive about being a part of a worshipping community.

The church worship service is not about us passively sitting back while the singers and instrumentalists make music. Rather, the church worship service is something that we make together as we join our voices, our hearts and our bodies in praise. Being gathered together in song, raising our voices in praise with those around us – even the ones that aren't necessarily on pitch – is a beautiful expression of love to God that he uses to bless others.

We are instructed to “teach and admonish” (correctively encourage) one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in our hearts.” That definitely sounds active, not passive, and is both a responsibility and a privilege.

When we respond in obedience to the invitation to sing together, we are not only putting a smile of God's face, but we very well may be having a life-changing impact on

someone without even being aware of it. This is a common, yet amazing result of how God is at work behind the scenes when we are obedient to him.

III. God Is Worthy of Our Praise in Every Circumstance, Always and Forever

It's easy to support a favorite sports team when they're winning. But what about when they aren't. The fans of a team that's struggling often either complain relentlessly or jump ship altogether for another bandwagon.

But, as the Bible clearly shows us, worshipping God is not something we are invited into only when life seems to be going well, and we feel like it. *God is worthy of our praise in every circumstance, always and forever.* God reveals himself as the Rock of our salvation – The same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, he is always worthy of our praise.

The Bible reveals God's nature. As we get to know God more intimately, we discover more and more how awesome he is and how worthy he is of our adoration, our praise, our worship!

That rock – the foundation of our very lives – is what we need to cling to. God is faithful and always here for us in good times and in hard times.



One of the songs we sing here, *Anchor*, speaks to this assurance:

I have this hope as an anchor for my soul
Through every storm I will hold to you
With endless love all my fear is swept away
In everything I will trust in you

There is hope in the promise of the cross
You gave everything to save the world you love
And this hope is an anchor for my soul
Our God will stand unshakable

Unchanging one who was and is to come
Your promise sure you will not let go

Our “light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Cor 4:17). That eternal glory is what we look forward to as we allow God to help us trust him with everything in our lives.

And remember, God is being worshipped continually by those who surround his heavenly throne. Those who are in God’s presence cry out,

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty
Who was, and is, and is to come.
You are worthy, our Lord and God,
To receive glory and honor and power.
(*Rev 4:8b & 11a*)

A.W. Tozer writes, “All of the examples that we have in the Bible illustrate that glad and devoted and reverent worship is the normal employment of moral beings.”



Open Up

EVERYONE SHARE ON ONE OR BOTH

- Identify a song of praise that you have been spiritually uplifted or moved by. Is there something identifiable about the lyrics or music that resonates with you?
- Share an experience that you have had, connected to corporate worship singing where you sensed the Spirit of God getting your attention.

Dig In

This song is probably my personal favorite of all the songs of worship that we sing together here at Summit Drive Church. However, as songs become familiar to me – and probably this applies to all of us – the lyrics can roll off the tongue without necessarily engaging the heart and mind.

Take a few moments to thoughtfully and carefully read or sing the lyrics of this song together, and then spend a few minutes going through these words on your own.

Come and stand before your maker full of wonder, full of fear. Come behold his power and glory yet with confidence draw near.

For the one who holds the heavens and commands the stars above. Is the God who bends to bless us with an unrelenting Love.

Rejoice, come and lift your hands and raise your voice. He is worthy of our praise. Rejoice, sing the mercies of your King and with trembling, rejoice.

We are children of the promise the beloved of the Lord. Won with everlasting kindness bought with sacrificial blood.

Bringing reconciliation to a world that longs to know. The affections of a Father who will never let them go.

All our sickness, all our sorrow Jesus carried up the hill. He has walked this path before us, he is walking with us still. Turning tragedy to triumph turning agony to praise. There is blessing in the battle so take heart and stand amazed.

Rejoice, when you cry to him, he hears your voice. He will wipe away your tears. Rejoice in the midst of suffering, he will help you sing.

1. What phrase or theme especially stands to you and why?



Read Colossians 3:15-16

2. Looking back at the above lyrics, where do you see encouragement toward
 - a. the peace of Christ,
 - b. members of one body
 - c. thankfulness

3. Turning attention away from this song now, how would *'the message of Christ dwelling among us richly'* impact our teaching and corrective encouragement of one another?

4. What habits are part of your current rhythm or what habits would you like to incorporate to help you sing sincere and enthusiastic songs of praise?

Prayer

It doesn't take much investigative ability to recognize that there are challenges in all of our lives. Pray for the person on your right, now and each day for the upcoming week – for challenges you are aware of and those you're not. God knows. And pray that his love for that person would be revealed more deeply causing their heart to gratefully sing.