



Singing is an essential part of corporate worship. There are over four hundred and fifty references to singing in the bible. We are expected to sing in every service. It's all-important leading a congregation in corporate song, singing solos, or a choir.

But have you ever wondered why God wants his people to sing? What role does singing have in corporate worship? What is the connection between Sunday singing and preaching? What are some considerations for the worship leader in selecting worship planning and song selection?

Although you may not be aware of it, the bible answers these questions.

Seven Biblical Principles for Worship Set Design at ICWW

These seven reasons answer these questions and reveal more about singing in the Christian life and at ICWW.

1. Singing is a Commandment.

Scripture doesn't allow singing. It is a commandment:

Don't drink wine; that is debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit and address one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make melody to God with your heart... (Ephesians 5, 18-19).

God's people are not just invited to sing. They are also commanded to sing. We sing because we are doing what God commands.



2. Singing Compliments the Preaching.

Let Christ's word dwell in you abundantly, teaching and admonishing each other in all wisdom, singing spiritual songs and psalms, and with thanksgiving in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

Singing is not just a warm-up for sermons or filler during services. Colossians 3:16 clearly states that singing is an integral part of preaching and that it is one of two great ways God has made his word live *richly* inside each of us.

At ICWW, we teach the concept of "stacking." Notice the order in which Paul outlines the critical components of worship – first teaching, second singing, and third prayer. We gather to make disciples, which is the primary command of Jesus. Disciples are made by preaching and teaching (Matthew 28:18-20). Therefore, songs chosen by the worship leader and the prayer theme of the day should support or "stack" upon the teaching.

Since singing is a command, we corporately live out the previous point. This command comes with a promise. Stacking songs and prayer with preaching causes the word to dwell within us richly. That is what believers should long for!

3. Singing Builds Disciples.

The Ephesians 5:19 verse says, "Addressing *one other* in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs ..."

The same thing is seen in Colossians 3:13-16: The appeal to sing follows the example "bearing with another" (v.13a) and "putting on love" (v.14). When we sing as a church family, we make the same confession. We are in agreement to be disciplined by the same word. All around us, we are hearing hundreds more testimony of faith!

The worship leader's role is to participate in disciple-making by ushering the house into testimonies of faith that say "yes" to receiving the preaching. Song selection reveals the alignment between the preached and the sung word. Worship leaders should never choose songs in the worship plan that do not

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support the preaching. In doing so, they inadvertently miss an opportunity to prepare hearts for the maturing that comes from the preached word.

4. Singing is Spiritual Warfare.

You probably didn't think of singing and spiritual warfare as a single thing, but this theme is evident in scripture. In the same passage where Paul urges corporate singing, he challenges the Colossians in Colossians 3 to put sin to death, to kill it. All the commands to love, peace, forgiveness, teaching, and singing will be attitudes and habits to eradicate sin. This is called deliverance. We sing together as if making a war cry because "the days and weeks are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

Consider how much the evil one must hate the position of a believer singing. Consider how much he must hate the hundreds or thousands singing. Few stances can identify us with Christ and against Satan better than our eyes, heart, and mind and the voice we lift to heaven in song on Sundays. Worship leaders must be sensitive to the *kyrotic* moments of deliverance available when we gather. They must usher singing hearts are ones that are at war with the evil one and the power sin.

5. Singing Increases Faith and Endurance Over Trials.

We often associate singing with when we are happy, or times are good. But, singing to bring strength for trials is what Acts 16 reveals. Silas and Paul are wrongly imprisoned to protect the Gospel. What do they do? Sing! (Acts 16:25).

This truth has been confirmed throughout history in the lives and persecutions of believers, especially people of color worldwide. Unjust world systems are oppressive, and God's gathered people need relief regularly. The truth is that we can relate to the truth in Acts 16 with Paul & Silas. Singing can strengthen us and help us persevere through trials. Part of our maturity is learning how to sing, even while suffering.

6. Singing is a Pathway to Joy.

Here's what the Psalmist shares about singing:

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- Psalms 5:11: "Let all those who seek refuge in you rejoice; they should sing for joy forever, and you should spread your protection over their heads, so that your name is exalted in them."
- Psalms 9:2: "I will rejoice and exalt you; I'll sing praises to your name O Most High."
- Psalm 51:14: "Deliver Me from Blood guiltiness O God, O God Of My Salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness."
- Psalms, 59:16: "I will sing of your strength and sing loudly of your unfailing love in the morning. You have been a refuge and fortress in my time of distress."
- Psalms: 63:7: "I thank you for your help and in the shadows of your wings, I will sing with joy."

The power of corporate singing as a pathway to joy continued well into the New Testament era. James 5:13 says, "Is anyone joyful?" Let him sing praise."

In scripture, joy and singing are linked. It is impossible to study these biblical themes without coming across the other. No matter how the people of God enter into the sanctuary, if they sing on one accord, they will find joy! This is why the post offering song selection remains as important as the worship set. How people leave a church is more important than how they come into a church. Sometimes the Holy Spirit leaves a "sweet" and "slow" presence on the house. When this is not the case, the worship leader should gather them in the joy of giving and celebration of the risen Christ who builds this community.

7. Singing Glorifies God.

Faithful obedience, deep roots within the word, building others up, fighting Satan and sin, persevering, and finding joy in God are all aspects of singing in corporate worship. The most important reason we sing is to glorify God. Ephesians 5:19 states, "Singing and making melody for the Lord with all your heart." We sing to *him* and about *him*.

For this reason, the worship leader is charged with examining every line of every lyric to ensure the song glorifies God over trials. It played on a Gospel music station does not mean the lyrics glorify God. This means a worshipper leader may need to alter specific lyrics in the song to make it more God-centric and suitable for public worship. There is a difference between singing about God and singing to God. Sometimes both are required in service. As discussed above, since singing disciplines other, there may be times we sing songs where we testify to each other that God is good. This is never the predominant nature of the songs we sing. We mainly gather to receive strength from God, so we tell him how good He is.

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We allow the Holy Spirit to come into our souls when we sing. When we praise Him through singing, we are glorifying Him. Our corporate actions and words speak volumes about the power of God, and he is pleased with our praise! Singing is a great way to express your worship and honor Him. Moreover, as believers, singing will also make you more devoted to the work of the Lord.