

If you are visiting with us, you will have noticed by this time that we sing acapella. That is we all sing without musical accompaniment.

Even our children join in when they know the words, even if they can't read.

Why?

Eph 5:18-19 Don't be drunk with wine, which will ruin your life, but be filled with the Spirit. (19) Encourage each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord. (ERV)

Col 3:15 Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. It is for peace that you were chosen to be together in one body. And always be thankful. (16) Let the teaching of Christ live inside you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (ERV)

Why do we all sing?

First, in v 18 we find emotion and care in time of sorrow and distress.

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

The reason for drunkenness is to enjoy life, to lift one's spirits, to have a sense of gladness.

Drunkenness will ruin your life, but singing will lift you from the depths of despair. (ERV)

*Eph 5:19 Encourage each other with psalms,
hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make
music in your hearts to the Lord. (ERV)*

When you attend services of a religious group
that does not have congregational singing, you
have chosen to avoid one of the greatest ways
to bind us together.

Music can have a positive influence on the emotions, according to Maria Spychiger, a psychologist from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. "When children sing or play music together, they have to learn to listen to one another," she says. "Competing behaviour is not compatible with making music."

The most compelling lessons taught by our Lord were cooperation and service. In the church, no one has any right to take preeminence over another. The hardest lesson to learn for the twelve was that they were not to have a position of authority over the others. In the church today the biggest problem is one of “my rights are greater than your rights”. Perhaps it is time to once again start practicing four part harmony in order to get the idea of cooperation firmly placed within the church. – a denominational writer in 1996

In the church in Corinth the Christians brought their own songs to the church.

1Co 14:26 So, brothers and sisters, what should you do? When you meet together, one person has a song, another has a teaching, and another has a new truth from God. One person speaks in a different language, and another interprets that language. The purpose of whatever you do should be to help everyone grow stronger in faith. (ERV)

We need to remember that we're not here to glorify self, but to serve others.

When the brethren at Corinth were having problems with spiritual gifts because they all wanted to speak in tongues, God told them ...

1Co 12:7-10 Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person. The Spirit gives this to each one to help others. (8) The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. And the same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge.

(9) The same Spirit gives faith to one person and to another he gives gifts of healing. (10) The Spirit gives to one person the power to do miracles, to another the ability to prophesy, and to another the ability to judge what is from the Spirit and what is not. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages, and to another the ability to interpret those languages.

11 One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things. The Spirit decides what to give each one.

And all for helping each other!

When Paul refers to the “teaching of Christ”
(ESV), we recognize this as being the
Scriptures.

Our songs are to be based on Scriptural
principles or the Scriptures themselves.

*Use all wisdom to teach and counsel each
other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*
(ERV)

These miraculously inspired brethren at Corinth
were to do all things to build one another up
(edification).

1 Cor 12:7 But to each one is given the
manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
(NAS)

*with all wisdom teaching and admonishing
one another with psalms and hymns and
spiritual songs*

Just as sermons reflect the teaching of Christ,
our songs do the same. Sometimes they are
pointed and require action while at other times
they comfort us.

And as we hear the different voices, we are often touched by the beauty of the words as we surround them with the beauty of our voices.

We do not focus on one person, but the harmony of all lifting their voices to teach each other.

We get that emotional uplifting from singing.

A few years ago, one of the cousins in the family said he often thought of throwing himself overboard as he walked the deck on night watch in the Pacific.

He said what stopped him were the hymns he remembered from his childhood.

2Ti 4:16-17 At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! (17) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

Where no one stands alone #757

Neither you nor I needs to worry about having no friends – we have one who died for us.

Spychiger made a special study of one class of children who were so difficult to control that no one wanted to teach them. A teacher agreed to take them on, as long as they were included in the group that received extra music lessons. Despite initial problems, the children learnt to play music together. After three years, the class gave a "spectacular" concert, says Spychiger. "It was a miracle."

God has provided His church with something to bring them together. -- not a miracle but God's command.

Amazingly, as our minds slip away in old age,
the very last things to go are the music we
have loved and sung over the years.

It is well with my Soul #345

We receive comfort as we think of the pain of parting – from this life or just going home.

Php 1:22-24 If I continue living here on earth, I will be able to work for the Lord. But what would I choose – to live or to die? I don't know. (23) It would be a hard choice. Sometimes I want to leave this life and be with Christ. That would be much better for me; (24) however, you people need me here alive.

God be with you #170

Many years ago, Stanley Moore worked in the lab with me and he started going to church with us. He had been raised as a Presbyterian, but when presented with Scriptures that contradicted Presbyterian practice, Stanley was troubled.

When asked what he thought about our services, Stanley said he enjoyed them, but then asked, “Why must you sing those dreadful songs at the end of your services?”

Stanley was talking about songs like “Almost persuaded, now to believe, almost persuaded Christ to receive ... Sad, sad that bitter wail, almost but lost. #31

Act 24:24-25 But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. (25) But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you."

Act 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know you believe!"

(28) King Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think you can persuade me to become a 'Christ-follower' so easily?" (29) Paul said, "It is not important if it is easy or if it is hard.

I pray to God that not only you but that everyone listening to me today could be saved and be just like me – except for these chains I have!"

I tell song leaders that when I finish my lesson,
I have done my best to present the evidence,
but their job to choose a song that will melt the
heart of the unbeliever as everyone encourages
them to turn to Jesus and to Him alone and
complete the sermon with the call to obey.

That call is more eloquent than I could ever be
as everyone in the audience is requesting those
who have not obeyed the gospel to do so
before they leave the building.

Will you be “Almost persuaded” or will you
hear his voice and obey?

Act 22:16 Now, don't wait any longer. Get
up, be baptized and wash away your sins,
trusting in Jesus to save you.'