

## *Our Approach to Praise and Worship*

In our description of the distinctives for this service, we wrote that it would be characterized by "Classic Praise and Worship, incorporating music that is noted for its theological content and worship value." What exactly does this mean?

Our worship will involve the use of songs that are filled with theological truth and that have either become, or in our estimation will become, classic expressions of worship in song. We will sing songs with the intent of blessing and impacting the entire family.

Ephesians 5:19 says, "*Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" We can observe several things in this verse:

- First, that praise and worship is characterized by a variety of musical expressions.
- Second, that it involves our participation together—there is something very special that takes place in the context of corporate praise and worship.
- And finally, that the end result is a directing of worship from our heart to the Lord. Worship should engage our hearts but still ensure that the focus always remains on the Lord.

***What is a psalm?*** One commentary says that the original word means "song of praise." The verb form meant primarily the plucking of strings, and the noun was used to describe a sacred song chanted to the accompaniment of instrumental music. At any rate, many of our contemporary praise songs, if well-written and scripturally and theologically sound, could be considered a "psalm."

***What is a hymn?*** Though the difference between a psalm and hymn may actually not be that much, it is generally agreed that the theological content of a hymn is often greater and more complex than the relatively more simple psalm. Hymns can be either hundreds of years old (***Great is Thy Faithfulness, A Mighty Fortress is Our God***), or modern (***In Christ Alone***). Not all “hymns” contain great theology or lasting value, but we will focus on the ones that do indeed enhance our worship.

***What is a spiritual song?*** This is literally a “Spirit-inspired song.” As a Pentecostal church, we welcome and encourage “singing in the Spirit.” Within the proper boundaries and authority of elders in a corporate gathering, singing in the Spirit can be a powerful expression that brings greater glory to the Lord, as well as healing, encouragement, and empowerment to the Body.

We will attempt to follow the exhortation of Scripture and encourage a diverse but worshipful expression each Sunday.

***What about instruments?*** We will be melody-driven in our worship, because we want the message of the song to be paramount. Often, our worship will lead us to sing unaccompanied. However, we also welcome the diversity of musical instruments, taking Psalm 150 as our cue. We do use drums, but only as they were designed—to keep the steady rhythm and pulse, not as the “centerpiece” of the worship experience. We dream of the day when our platform is filled with many young worshipers playing piano, guitar, stringed instruments, wind instruments, etc. . . . all learning to dedicate their talent and gift to the Lord.

Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs . . . accompanied by instruments dedicated to enhancing the melody and lyrics . . . all focused upon the greater glory and honor of our Lord . . . this is our intent and desire—***Soli Deo Gloria!***