



# Blackfoot

## Church of Christ

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### When Singing Is At Its Best

By Colton McDaniel

“I love to sing.” This phrase was a warmup in my high school choir, but it is also the way I really feel about singing. My earliest memories are of singing Doo-wop songs. Yet as much as I loved performing with choirs growing up and no matter how fulfilling it was to earn good ratings at state competitions, no music is as pleasing as singing praises with the people of God. This is how God designed it. He created music to be naturally enjoyable to the human ear. But on top of that, He prescribed a combination of that naturally enjoyable activity with words of edification and praise to create psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Unfortunately, I have heard some brethren who say they really do not enjoy song worship. There are perhaps two reasons for this kind of thinking. First, they may not like the sound of their own voice. Second, sometimes the church has developed a somewhat stoic approach to worship – we come, sit, listen, and leave. In so doing, they have forgotten that God wants us to enjoy worship, not just to go through the motions. Both are common concerns, but it is the latter we will address in this article.

#### The Joy of Song Worship

What happens when we give our best to God in song? Many answers could be given, but the primary outcome which comes to my mind is indescribable joy. Certainly, we can see throughout the book of Psalms, as well as in the rest of the Scriptures, that singing is a sign of joy for those participating in it

(Psalm 98:1-4; James 5:13). The time we spend together in song is a time of rejoicing.

**Individual Joy.** When we bring to God our songs of praise and thanksgiving, it stirs something within us and we are moved. In James 5:13, singing hymns can certainly be a reaction to joy, but when we sing it continues to generate gladness within us. Remember when Paul and Silas found themselves in prison, their reaction to persecution was to pray and to sing hymns to God (Acts 16:25). Hymns bring us joy even in the midst of troubles and trials. Consequently, singing to God ought to be a regular practice in our day. In James 5, the language implies not “if anyone is cheerful, go ahead and let him sing psalms” but bears more the emphatic idea of “he must sing psalms.”

Though we certainly can find joy when we conduct personal song worship, we also experience great joy when we sing with one another. When we come together, we are there for the purpose of stirring up one another; “one another” meaning there is benefit for the individual and the group. When we sing together, we must understand that not every song will have the same impact on everyone. One who sings “It Is Well with My Soul” may be seeking peace in the midst of trials, while another across the room sings, praising God because he is already experiencing peace.

**Collective Joy.** When we sing together, we grow together. As we join voices, we become bonded in a way that cannot be expressed. This growth is, of course, a primary function of meeting together in general, as well as when joining in song (Hebrews 10:24-25).

God has made it clear that He desires His people to sing together. Collective singing is God’s will because of what it stirs within us (Ephesians 5:17, 19). Notice the phrase “making melody in your heart.” We often get distracted by discussions of what this does not mean to the neglect of interpreting what it really says. As said above, when we sing together, our hearts sing. This mode of worship unites because we are pouring our hearts to one another. It is not just our voices, but also our souls that are speaking.

External Joy. When we glorify God within the assembly, others who join us and see the joy we share will (hopefully) desire to know more about it. I have recently heard it said that we must not allow visitors to dictate what we preach on or what we do in worship. Now assuming that we are not changing the will of God to please those outsiders, I must disagree with this kind of thinking. Certainly, edifying one another is why we assemble, but I also think of Christ's earliest teachings in the Sermon on the Mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16; emphasis added).

When we are together praising God in song and someone walks in, we should want to show them what true, spiritual music is all about. As we teach one another, we are teaching them as well. Our growth results in the growth of others. This is a scenario God anticipated in 1 Corinthians 14:23-26. Understanding this is in a context of spiritual gifts, a similar situation ought to be what we desire today. When people come into our assemblies and hear us speaking to one another in psalms, I have often heard them say, "The singing is beautiful." Quite often, those visitors return. Our singing is not just about bringing joy to ourselves but also to edify those who hear.

Divine Joy. But what we sometimes forget to acknowledge is the joy experienced by our God in all of this. Our song worship is first and foremost about praising Him. We receive joy from it – and praise God for that! – but our songs are all about His glory ("to the Lord," Ephesians 5:19). If we are honoring God in our songs, why should He not take pleasure in it? This is what sacrifice is all about – praising God and Him being pleased with our offering. Though not speaking about singing specifically, Hebrews 13:15 says that when we give "the fruit of our lips," it is a "sacrifice of praise." In it, He is well pleased.

Song worship greatly pleases our Lord and God. In Hebrews 2:10-12, even Jesus loves to sing praises to God. The implication of these verses is that when we sing, Jesus sings with us. God is therefore an active participant in worship. In fact, worship would be nothing if Jesus were not here joining with us. Singing brings God praise and joy! Though Psalm 147:1 is certainly the sentiment of the psalmist himself, he by inspiration is also proclaiming

the feelings of God: “Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful” (emphasis added).

To worship God in song is a blessing to all. How beautiful is the sound! How glorifying the praise! Singing is at its best when we give our hearts, minds, and voices entirely to Him; and when singing is at its best, true joy is found. “I love to sing.”

### **Prayer Requests & Announcements**

- Larry, Leukemia diagnosis
- Ray & Ginger, as Ray deals with Alzheimer’s symptoms
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) has been transferred to Hospice care
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines
- Our Scheduled Gospel meeting with Doug Roush: May 13-17

## **Worship Assignments**

### **Today**

**Song Leader** – David Porter

**Lord’s Table** – Larry Thompson

### **Wednesday**

**Song Leader** – David Porter

**Invitation** – Ben Palmer

Blackfoot Church of Christ  
370 North Shilling Ave.  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

### **Meeting Times:**

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM  
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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