

Songs at Eaton (Bobin St.)

Why do we sing what we sing? That is the question this document is aiming to answer by providing a framework by which we as a church decide what we sing.

Our worship of God has **one** overarching aim, with **two** natural outcomes. The overarching aim is to **exalt**, the two natural outcomes are saints being **edified** and the lost being **evangelized**.

Exalt God (Christ)

Our aim in worship, with our songs, services, prayers, sermons and even our whole lives is to glorify God. To glorify, or to exalt God is to **Acknowledge** who He is, **Boast** in His saving grace towards us, **Confess** our sins to Him & our need for Him and **Declare** His worthiness for praise.

So a good song should:

Acknowledge

- ❖ Does the song specifically name 1 or more of the Godhead?
- ❖ Does it speak more about God than it speaks about us?
- ❖ Does it bring insight, through creative expression, concerning an aspect of the character or nature of our God?
- ❖ Does it speak about God in a way that a new/young Christian can understand? (Simple, yet true, without being funky)

Boast

- ❖ Does the song speak about Jesus and His work on the cross?
- ❖ Does it use theological or biblical language to guide in the formation of the congregation's understanding of the Gospel?

Confess

- ❖ Does the song confess our old nature as sinners?
- ❖ Does it speak of God as saviour, healer, cleanser &/or forgiver of sins?

Declare

- ❖ Does the song speak of good Biblical truth about God or...
- ❖ Does the song speak of good personal truth to God?

Not every song will tick all these boxes, but over the course of the year and within our selections of songs we should be touching on all these things.

Also note that there has been a movement historically from hymns that declared truth about God towards songs that declare truth to God. That shift is sometimes subtle, sometimes blaringly obvious- but it needs to be noted. Again we need a balance.

Edify the body & Evangelize the lost

So when we do well at exalting God, we encourage or build up the other saints in our services and we declare the truth about God to those who don't yet know Him in our service (visitors, kids/youth, church folk who lack a personal faith). Thus we can't just focus on the content of a song, but also on some other factors, as follows:

- ❖ Is it singable? (Key, range, cadence, speed, language)
- ❖ Is it relevant? (Is it timeless truth or is it contextually bound?)
- ❖ Is the song direction upward, outward or inward? (God, others, soul)
- ❖ Would you sing it around a gravesite?
- ❖ Would you share it with a lost friend in a time of need?

These are the sorts of questions we want to be asking and these are the sorts of categories we want to be thinking in. Some songs are for a season; some songs are for generations- we need to be ok with some old songs never being forgotten and others being retired after doing their job. We need to be wise about what new songs we introduce- newness does not make it better or worse, but does provide a fresh opportunity.