

# Leading Worship

## *(Song Leading and Speaking)*

### Introduction

- When we lead worship, we are not performing. The focus is not on us, but on leading souls before the Father above in worship. He is our audience, and the One we are doing our best to please.
- In this class, we are going to be focusing on ways we can improve as worship leaders. This will be a time we talk about technical matters and planning strategies. We know leading worship is important, so it is also important for us to lead to the best of our abilities.
- Our goal is to learn as much as we can in class time and develop good habits. As with any other skill, it will take time for us to learn. Once it is learned, though, it will be second nature. If we learn in this class, we won't have to worry about the technical stuff in a worship service. Then, we can just focus on the privilege of leading worship.

### What We Will Learn

1. How to effectively lead others in worship before God.
2. How to pitch songs, starting them on the right note.
3. How to use hand motions to beat time during a song.
4. How to identify notes and time signatures in a song.
5. How to lead assertively in a song service.
6. How to plan a worship service.

### Appearance Matters

- We all know that God looks at the heart, rather than the outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). It is easy to get so caught up in how we look or how we are dressed that we lose sight of why we worship.
- With that in mind, our appearance when we speak or lead singing matters. In our culture, the way you dress indicates the importance of a place or event. For example, we dress one way at a wedding and another way when we are hanging around the house over the weekend.
- On a scale of 1-10 (1 being least important and 10 being most important), how important are the following events?
  1. Attending a funeral –
  2. Shopping at Wal-Mart –
  3. Going to the movies –
  4. Worshipping God –
- Which are more important? How should that affect our appearance?

- When we lead in worship, we have a tremendous privilege, and the way we dress should reflect that. This does not mean you have to go spend a lot of money on a new suit for every week of the month, but it does mean that you get up a little early and take the time to get ready.
- Suggestion: Make the effort to wear a tie when you lead in worship on Sunday. You will be amazed at how many will appreciate it. It also sends a signal that you take seriously the opportunity to serve publicly.

## **Planning Matters**

*(I know this seems like a lot, but most of it is common sense.)*

- **Plan in advance.** If you know you are going to be leading singing ahead of time, make sure that your songs are carefully selected in advance. Don't wait until you arrive at the building to pick out what songs to sing.
- **Warm up your voice.** Sing a song or two as you are getting ready, and it would be a good idea to sing through the verses you plan on leading beforehand.
- **Open with a familiar song.** The opening song sets the tone for the entire service, and if everyone knows it, they can sing out.
- **Have people stand.** Physically, we can sing better when we stand. Two suggestions for standing – on the first song and on the song before the sermon. Standing on the first song helps to set the tone, and standing before the sermon gets the blood moving before sitting during the sermon.
- **Plan song order carefully.** If you are going to lead an unfamiliar song, make sure it is between two familiar songs. This helps keep the momentum of a song service going.
- **Plan the song subjects carefully.** Try to choose songs that tie to the theme of the sermon, and include songs that prepare minds for what is about to happen (before the prayer, before the Lord's Supper, etc.). Songs before prayer might be slower and more contemplative, while songs before the lesson could be upbeat. Songs about the cross are always appropriate for the Lord's Supper, while songs about our blessings prepare our minds for the contribution. Our songbooks have a topical index that is helpful in coordinating the subjects.
- **Announce the songs clearly.** Make sure you give everyone the song number, even if it is on the screen. Allow time for people to turn there, but don't pause for too long in between songs.
- **Start assertively.** Remember, the hardest part of leading is getting the song started. Make sure you have the note and tempo clearly in your mind, and start with the idea you don't mind singing a few notes before everyone joins in with you (because that is often what happens).
- **Be ready for the invitation.** On the invitation song, be ready to sing as soon the sermon is over. You can begin singing from your seat while you walk to the podium. This assumes that you are close to the front by that time. The easiest way to do that is to sit close to the front.
- **Be ready for extra singing.** If there is a baptism, be ready to lead songs while the person is preparing and right after the baptism. Always have a few familiar songs in the back of your mind that you feel comfortable leading.