

# HOW TO CHOOSE NEW SONGS

Congregations interact with God through the music we present. New songs can give energy and life to congregational worship. Songs that are new are not just the ones most recently written. A new song could be an older song that is new to your congregation. It can be difficult to introduce new music to worship because of independent factors that are specific to individual congregations.

The first thing to consider when choosing a new song is whether the lyrics have sound theology. You put praise on the lips of God's people as you lead them in worship. It is important that the lyrics they are singing are scripturally correct and fit within our doctrine.

While the lyrics are the most important part of a worship song, the melody carries those lyrics. It must be "sing-able." Make sure that the rhythms used in the melody are easily sung. Big intervals can be difficult for congregations to grasp and can hinder their participation. You don't need to avoid these types of songs all the time. You just need to be aware that they may take longer to learn. You may even need to adapt some of these rhythms or intervals to make the song more accessible.

Make sure that the song is in an appropriate key. Check that the pitch of the melody is not too high or low. Look at where the melody is most often sung during the song and be aware of the pitch you are asking the congregation to sing for a prolonged time. Make sure this is in a comfortable register. When you are listening to recordings of worship songs, remember that they are being presented by professional singers. Most of our congregations are not filled with people with this type of vocal range. You will likely need to change the key for congregational use. This will allow any singer in your congregation to be involved, no matter their level of ability.

Be aware of how much new music you are asking your congregation to sing. If they are always learning something new, their opportunity to engage deeply in worship can be limited.

Choose three or four songs (or whatever number works for your congregation) through a season that can be added to the collection of music you already use.

Start becoming more aware of how often you use specific songs. Does your congregation need a new upbeat song or are they just getting comfortable with the ones you have introduced?

Be aware of what is happening in the congregation. Are the lyrics poignant to a situation in your church's life? Will singing this song be beneficial to nurture the congregation? Are they participating? How are they reacting to new songs when they are presented?

**Sing a new  
song to the  
LORD! Let the  
whole earth  
sing to the  
LORD!  
Psalm 96 : 1 NLT**