

A TIME FOR MUSIC

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December 11

One of my favorite things to do is to go for a long drive and crank up some good rock music. I have had the pleasure of driving solo across the country on several occasions. I enjoy picking an artist at the beginning of the day and listening to and (losing my voice) singing along with their entire library.

Music is one of God's great gifts to humanity. It has the power to affect your mood, convey emotion, build suspense in a movie, help you focus while studying, lull you to sleep, or keep you motivated during a workout. It can even make a long day at work more enjoyable. Learning to play an instrument can help in the development of fine motor skills, as well as keeping the mind sharp. In the Bible, we see perhaps the most important use of music, which is to unite God's people in praise to him.

Please read Psalm 150

Music is incredibly important in Scripture. There are at least 185 songs in the Bible, plus many poems that may or may not have been intended to be sung. Of these songs, 150 are found in the book of Psalms. Biblical songs come in many forms. As you might expect, many are songs of praise to God for what he has done. The very first song recorded in Scripture is the song of Moses and Miriam in Exodus 15, celebrating God's miraculous rescue of the nation of Israel from captivity in Egypt. There are songs of victory, including perhaps the first international hit song in history, recorded in 1 Samuel 18:7 and 21:11, after David defeated Goliath. There are songs of mourning and lament, celebration, prophecy, judgment, and justice. There are battle hymns, songs to be sung when approaching the temple, and even love songs! Many of the Psalms were songs of waiting for God to rescue his people and set things right in the world. These songs were fulfilled with the coming of Jesus.

For many people, the Advent and Christmas season is a wonderful and exciting time of year. For others, it is a difficult season to walk through, whether because of the loss of a loved one, separation from family, financial stress, negative past experiences, or any number of other reasons. However, notice in today's passage that God's praiseworthiness is not based on our experiences or feelings, but on his unequalled greatness! Everything that has breath is invited to praise God with music. Just as Jesus and his followers sang a hymn on the night he was arrested, and as Paul and Silas sang songs of praise after being severely beaten and imprisoned, we can sing our praises to God no matter the circumstances we find ourselves in.

During this season of waiting, we not only remember the first coming of Jesus the Messiah, but also look forward to his glorious return. If you are comfortable, please feel free to sing a song together as a family that anticipates the coming of Christ, such as O Come O Come Emmanuel or Come Thou Long Expected Jesus. Alternatively, you can check out some Psalms that look forward to the coming Messiah (Psalm 44, 74, 79, 80, 85, 98, 130).

Pray the Song of Moses in Revelation 15:3-4 – "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed."