

How to Create a Hymn Based Service

I. Why a Hymn Based Service

- a. *Desire* - There is often a desire on the part of some congregants to experience the power of hymns more often. Additionally, some pastors and other church leaders (depending on their backgrounds) have a strong affinity for hymns.
- b. *Necessity of Worship* - Christianity is a faith where our Theology is sung just as much as it is preached. That has its roots in the Old Testament. King David assigned both minstrels (musicians) and singers from the Levites to prophesy with music:

I Chronicles 25:1 - Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals.

I Chronicles 15:16 - And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

It is therefore clearly and Biblically a priestly function (of the Levites) to lead the people of God in worship. The Word of God is to be preached *and* sung. But what advantages to do hymns bring?

- c. *One Accord* - Hymns bring some of the strongest potential for being on one accord. Getting the worship leaders, singers, musicians and congregation on one accord ushers in the very glory of God:

II Chronicles 5:11-14 - ¹¹ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course:

¹² Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:)

¹³ It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord;

¹⁴ So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

Hymns accomplish all of these purposes. Hymns have strong melodic structure which makes them easy to sing and remember. Those melodies also serve as a unifying

element for all that sing them, i.e., gets us on one accord. Hymns have rich theology embedded in them, as many of them tell of the writer's personal experience with God, or their hope for Heaven. Finally, hymns are easy to arrange; they can always be sung as is, or with as much or as little embellishment as the musicians and singers desire.

II. First Step – Measure the Interest

Ask your musicians, singers, and congregants to fill out a form. It can be an insert into the bulletin or an online form found on your website. That form should contain the following fields:

- First Name
- Email address
- Would you be interested in having more hymns in service?
- Would you come to an All Hymn Sing Along?
- What Day and Time would be best for you?
- List Three of your Favorite Hymns
 - Hymn 1:
 - Hymn 2:
 - Hymn 3:

Then as you organize these results you can see where your people are with the idea of hymns, and an *All Hymn Hour* service or event.

III. Second Step – Train Your Musicians

Do not assume that your musicians know hymns. Also, do not assume that the version that they know is automatically the one you want. Meet with them and have them play what they know for you. Make sure they are knowledgeable and comfortable with the version of the hymn that you want featured.

For example, *Amazing Grace* has a version in 3.4 time as well as 4.4 time. It has many different stylistic variations based on culture. Be sure that the one they'll play and sing is the one you want.

IV. Third Step – Develop an Order of Service

If you are incorporating hymns into your morning worship, be sure to have a minimum of one hymn sung per week. That way the worship leaders and congregants will gradually get used to the idea of them.

If you are creating an all hymn service, then set the time and day based on the results of your survey. The service should not last more than an hour.

Your order of service should be as follows:

- Opening Hymn
- Opening Prayer
- Brief Introduction as to what the *All Hymn Worship Hour* is about
- Content should be mostly congregational hymns with:
 - One solo performance
 - One instrumental performancemixed in to add variety.
- Final hymn should always be familiar and easily singable
- Closing Prayer & Benediction
- Recessional Hymn

V. Fourth Step – Advertise, Advertise, Advertise

If this is a brand new venture or idea for your congregation, you must do two things:

- Continually let them know when it is
- Energetically promote it

Have different colored bulletin inserts advertising the *All Hymn Hour*. Put an announcement in the morning announcements that are read aloud. Put a reminder on your overhead screen. Feature it prominently on your website. Continually post about it on Social Media.

Be sure that your church is well stocked with hymnals for this event. If you need to purchase hymnals cheaply, paste this link in your browser to order them:

<http://amzn.to/2jhTjHc>

VI. Fifth Step – Record & Stream

It will really help in establishing this idea if the service is live streamed. There are many different ways to do so, from Periscope to Facebook Live, to YouTube live. Others that enjoy hymns will be drawn to this service (and your church) because of this program. It also helps create a video historical archive of your church's events and services.

A video needs to be made of the service as well. Excerpts can be posted on YouTube and emailed in your church's newsletter. People that attended can revisit and enjoy their favorite parts of service.

VII. Sixth Step – Assess

If you do a service every week, assess them all once a month. If you do less than once per week *All Hymn Hour* services, then assess them once per quarter. Find out what is working and what is not. Find out musician favorites versus audience favorites (they won't be the same thing!) Find out if your time and day is optimal.

VIII. Conclusions

As with all things, this framework is just scratching the surface. If you'd like a personal mentor to help you with this, I am available for:

- Telephone Conferencing
- Skype Conferencing
- In person Workshops

Contact my office to schedule an appointment.

- Email: pdt@ProphetDavidTaylor.org
- Phone: 773-792-7748

Initial fifteen minute consultation is free, and we schedule according to your needs after that. God bless you as you worship through hymns!