Singing In Worship

Intro: Andrew Fletcher (1653-1716) is credited with saying “Let me write the songs of a nation and I care not who writes its laws.” This shows the great power and influence of singing. Its influence can be seen not only in public worship, but also at home, work, and play.

I. THE PURPOSE OF SINGING IN WORSHIP

A. To Praise God.
1. It is a means of expressing our joy to God.
   a. Christians are to be joyous; Phi. 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”
   c. Songs such as “Sing On, Ye Joyful Pilgrims”
2. It is a means of expressing our gratitude to God.
   a. Christians are to be thankful.
   b. Singing and thankfulness are inseparable; Eph. 5:19-20 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”
   c. Songs such as “Count Your Many Blessings.”
3. It is a means of petitioning God.
   a. Phi. 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
   b. Songs such as “Here Me When I Call,” “Purer In Heart, O God.”
B. To Influence others.
1. It is a means of teaching a non-Christian.
   a. 1 Cor. 14:15, 23-26 “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.... If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”
   b. Songs such as “Buried With Christ”
2. It is a means of teaching one another
   a. Eph. 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”
   b. Col. 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
   c. Songs such as “More About Jesus”
3. It is a means of promoting unity of the church.
   a. Singing identifies us with a common cause (National anthem unites us as Americans).
   b. Singing can identify us with the greatest Cause—the cause of Christ.
c. Songs such as “Bless Be the Tie that Binds,” “God’s Family,” “How Sweet, How Heavenly.”

C. To affect the individual.
1. It reminds us about God:
   a. His existence: “There Is A God”
   b. His power: “A Mighty Fortress”
   c. His mercy: “Years I Spent in Vanity and Pride”
   d. His forgiveness: “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind”
2. Among many things it is a source of:
   a. Job 35:10 “But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;”
   b. Comfort; “When Peace Like a River”/ “It is Well with My Soul”
   c. Courage; “Onward Christian Soldiers”
   d. Trust; “Trust and Obey”
   e. Consecration or devotion; “All to Jesus I Surrender”
   f. Hope; “Whispering Hope”

II. The Content of Songs in Worship
A. Scriptures
1. Eph. 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”
2. Col. 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
3. The distinction between these three (psalms, hymns, spiritual songs) is difficult to determine totally and maybe some overlapping in meaning.

B. Psalms
1. This would include psalms from the Old Testament book but also any sacred poem along those lines or songs with the character of the psalms.
2. Songs such as “The Lord’s My Shepherd,” “Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah.”

C. Hymns
1. Songs of praise to God.
2. Augustine listed three essentials of a hymn:
   a. It must be sung
   b. It must be praise
   c. It must be to God
3. Songs such as “Worthy of Praise,” “We Praise Thee, O God”

D. Spiritual Songs
1. Other types of religious songs; a general category.
2. Songs such as “Bless Be the Tie”

III. The Manner of Singing in Worship
A. Sing with the spirit
1. John 4:23-24 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
2. 1 Cor. 14:15 “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
3. This has to do with our attitude of heart; it must be fervent and sincere.
   a. We must know what we are singing—understand the words (“Night with Ebion Pinion, “In Vain in High and holy Lays,” “Here I raise my Ebenezer”).
   b. We must make sure we mean what we sing (“I surrender All,” “Here Am I, Send Me”).

B. Sing with the understanding
1. 1 Cor 14:15 “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
2. Col 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
3. This deals with giving understanding or teaching others.
4. We must make sure that we teach the truth in our singing (unscriptural songs: “Just A Little Talk with Jesus,” “Jesus is Coming Soon” among others).

C. Sing with grace
1. Col. 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
2. This is our hearts pervaded with the grace and love of God that prompts gratitude in our hearts to God.

Conclusion: Singing is vital to acceptable worship to God. In heaven we will be able to sing around the throne of God forever. Thus, let us enjoy it here and make it the best we can.