

What Kinds of Songs Are Sung In A Liturgical Worship Service?

What kind of music do you like to listen to? Some of you probably prefer to listen to rock music, some country music, some rap/hip hop music, some jazz music, and others of you something else. Some of you probably listen to all different kinds of music. Since people like different kinds of music, pastors and worship leaders must decide what kinds of songs are best for their congregation to sing in their worship services. Some choose to sing modern songs played by a band. Churches who use a liturgical worship service typically choose hymns and liturgical songs played by an organ. But why do they sing these songs? In this column entitled, "Questions About Christianity", we are learning about the liturgical worship service. In this month's article, we will answer this question, "What kinds of songs are sung in a liturgical worship service?"

In liturgical worship services, there are three main types of songs that are typically sung: hymns, psalms, and liturgical songs. Many congregations have hymnals or songbooks, which contain these songs. The liturgical songs are typically found in the worship service, while the psalms and hymns are located in different sections in the hymnal.

The first type of songs are hymns. Thousands of hymns have been written over the years, which could be included in a congregation's hymnal. However, most church bodies choose to include less than one thousand in their hymnals for the sake of space. Some of these hymns are over a thousand years old, some several hundred years old, and some are brand new. Typically, hymns are played by an organ, but at times they are played by a band. Usually, hymns are sung at the beginning of the worship service, at the end of different parts in the worship service, and at the end of the worship service.

The second type of songs are psalms. Psalms come from the book of Psalms in the Bible, which was written between 1500-500 B.C. This was the hymnal for the Old and New Testament Jewish people, as well the early Christian Church. Over the years, congregations who use liturgical worship services have said and sung these psalms. Many of the psalms congregations sing today have a refrain as well as verses, which come directly from the psalm itself. Typically, a psalm is sung once during a liturgical worship service, but it is very common for them to be song more often.

The third type of songs are liturgical songs. Liturgical songs have been part of the liturgical worship service ever since the Middle Ages. Some of these songs are songs people sang in the Bible such as the Song of Mary (Latin-*Magnificat*), which Mary sang when she went to stay at Zechariah and Elizabeth's home. Some of the main liturgical songs sung during a liturgical worship service include Lord, Have Mercy (Latin-*Kyrie*), Glory Be to God on High (Latin-*Gloria in Excelsis*), Creed (Latin-*Credo*), Holy, Holy, Holy (Latin-*Sanctus*), and Lamb of God (Latin-*Agnus Dei*). Liturgical songs are sung at various times during a liturgical worship service. We will discuss some of the main liturgical songs in upcoming articles.

There are three main reasons why congregations who use a liturgical worship service sing hymns, psalms, and liturgical songs. The first reason is they are Biblical. This means they are based on the Bible, which is God's Word. The second reason is many of the songs refer to Jesus. Regardless of what songs a congregation sings, every song should be chosen for these two reasons because it is through the gospel message about Jesus that God the Holy Spirit brings people to faith and strengthens it. The third reason these songs are chosen is that they are singable. Even though many people would argue that some of these songs are not singable, a great majority of them are. When pastors and worship leaders choose songs for these three main reasons people enjoy liturgical worship services more, but more importantly they grow in their faith in Jesus.

