

# EFFECTIVE SONG LEADING

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HOW REALLY ACT LIKE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING...



# ANYONE CAN LEAD SINGING...

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...if they:

- Are willing to stand in front of people.
- Can announce a song.
- Don't "chase rabbits".

They don't have to:

- Be able to sing well.
- Wave their arm in time.

But let's take it to the next level.



# LEADERSHIP

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- “Everything rises and falls on leadership” – Lee Roberson (not John Maxwell)
- You cannot just consume music; you must produce it.
- You must lead in:
  - Music theory and practice.
  - Theology and practice.
- The need starts at the top – the pastor.
  - Too many pastors today do not understand music and pass it off to someone who they feel is better qualified.

# KNOWLEDGE FACTOR

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- Do not joke about being ignorant.
- You don't have to have a Master's Degree in music, but you shouldn't be in musical kindergarten either.
- Music terminology and symbols should be familiar.
- Today, there is so much free information online (YouTube) that ignorance is unforgiveable.

# SPIRITUAL FACTOR

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- Sacred music is a spiritual endeavor.
  - Note that priests, not the “laity”, led Temple music.
- “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” – Ephesians 5:19
- We give God glory through our music, which means we should do our best.
- I would rather have a spiritual song leader than a talented one.

# THE PHYSICAL FACTOR

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- Look nice.
- Conduct yourself professionally.
- Be consistent on the platform, in the church, and in public.

# PERSONALITY FACTOR

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- Be personable.
- Be appropriate.
- Be natural.

# PREPARATION FACTOR

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- Don't just “wing it”.
- Take care in song selection.
  - Don't be repetitious.
  - Use songs that fit the theme or time.
- **KNOW THE SONG BEFORE YOU LEAD IT.**
  - Practice singing it, look up difficult words, etc.
  - Look up the history of the song.

# APPROPRIATENESS FACTOR

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- Use fitting songs for the season – Christmas, Easter, Patriotic, etc.
  - Note – Do not overdue Patriotic songs. We gather to worship God, not our country. Yes, we can give God glory for our nation, but we can get that backwards if we are not careful.
- Use appropriate verses.
  - You CAN and sometimes SHOULD sing verse 3.
  - This example happened in our church – we skipped verse 3 of “America the Beautiful” (“heroes proved through liberating strife”) on Veteran’s Day.

# EXCITEMENT FACTOR

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- You don't have to lead singing; you get to lead singing!
- Attitudes are contagious.
- If you love singing, your people will too.

# TEAM FACTOR

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- In our churches, the pastor is the head of all that happens in a church.
- In some churches, the song leader may not be the music director.
- The music of a service should complement and enhance the entirety of the service.
- Develop a good relationship with your music team.

# RANDOM PRACTICAL TIPS

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- Know Christ.
- Walk with Christ.
- Keep a servant's heart.
- Pray and prepare.
- Arrive early.
- Look up and mark the locations of songs in the hymnal ahead of time.
- Confer with instrumentalists to make sure they are comfortable with the selected songs
- If the accompanists are able, consider transposing songs into keys that are easier to sing.
- Greet people before the service. Don't let the first time they see you be when you walk to the platform.
- Start on time.
- DO NOT start by saying, "good morning", waiting for a response, then saying they can do better. It is past time for that to die out.
- Be joyful and friendly in appearance and manner.

# RANDOM PRACTICAL TIPS

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- Be positive.
- Act like you are the happiest person in the world to be doing what you are doing.
- Be genuine.
- Always give your best even when not feeling your best.
- Don't lock your knees.
- Speak clearly.
- In general, limit unnecessary speaking. Leave the preaching to the preacher.
- There are times it can be effective to say a few words about the history of a hymn or perhaps to highlight a phrase or verse. But keep it limited.
- Announce the song number **THREE TIMES**.
- If you make a mistake, then smile and get back on track.

# RANDOM PRACTICAL TIPS

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- Sing out.
- Sing the lead/melody.
- Don't stare down at your song book. Look at the people. You are leading them not notes on a page.
- If looking at the people makes you nervous, look over the back of their heads to the back wall.
- Do try to look around the auditorium at the congregation.
- Give visual cues as often as possible.
- Motivate others to sing without being a cheerleader at a pep rally.
- Know the pastor or preacher and what they expect or like.

# RANDOM PRACTICAL TIPS

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- Stick to the plan unless prompted by the pastor or Divine Providence. Do not improvise if you can help it.
- Sing with the best technique you can.
- Stand close enough to the microphone to be picked up but without overpowering it.
- Watch the sound booth. There needs to be communication between the platform and the sound booth to address any issues in a timely and inconspicuous manner.
- When finished, depart quickly and quietly. Don't run into the person who is coming up behind you.
- Avoid “showmanship” tactics like having one side of the auditorium sing against the other.
- Stay humble.
- Stay late.
- Deflect praise.

# RANDOM PRACTICAL TIPS

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- Watch out for Satan's traps and attacks.
- It is OK to be moved emotionally by a song, but don't do it for show.
- Do the best you can with what you have.
- Develop communication skills.
- Stick with it.

NOW GET TO IT!