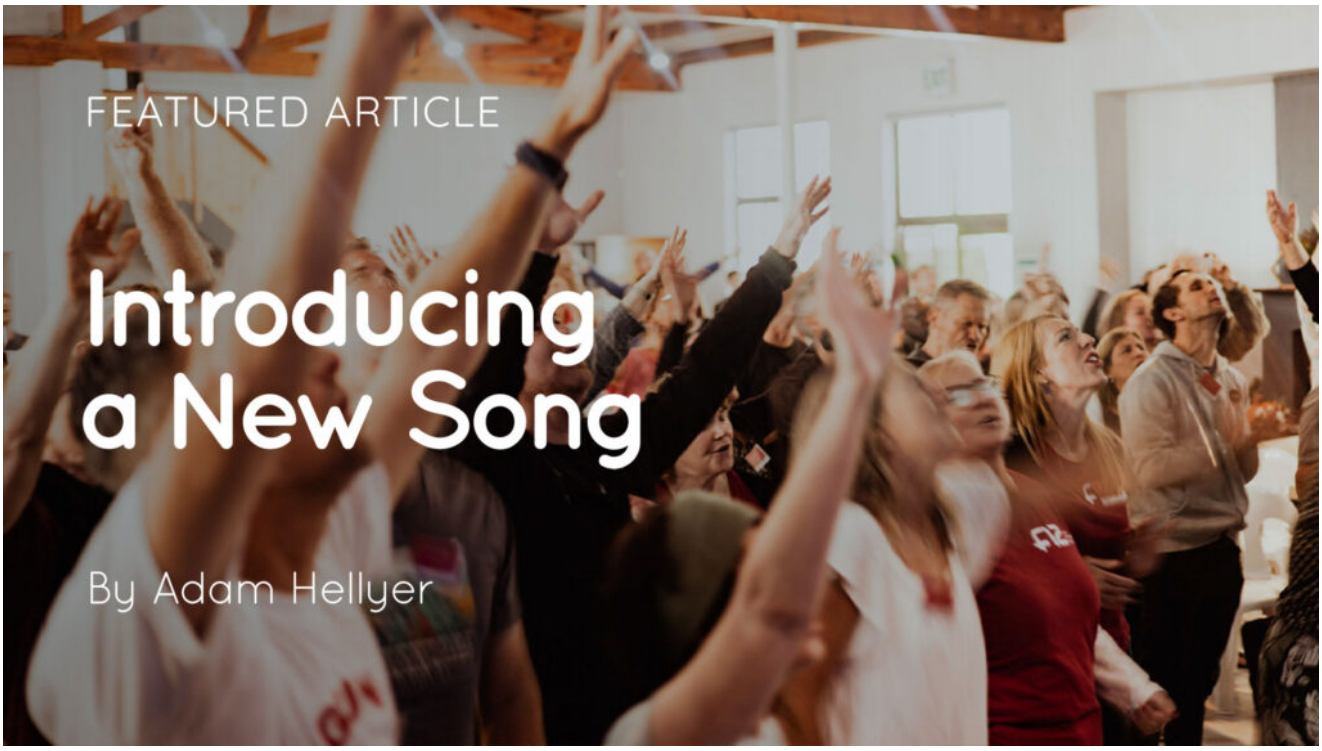
Introducing a New Song

Adam Hellyer 28 March 2016



An essential part of the song writing process is introducing those songs to your congregation. This is exciting but can also be challenging. Always keep in mind that the worship team is on stage to serve both God, the Giver of our musical talents, and the congregation, who are just as important a part of the worship as we are. Our job is to support the congregation in worship, whether they have a musical talent or not. With that in mind we must remember not all church members will have the ability to learn a new song as quickly as we would hope they could. Although we want to stretch their boundaries, we must also love them and help them through the stretching. Here you will find a few practical points to help you when you introduce a new song to your church.

Ask: Do we need this song?

The first question to ask before introducing a new song is, do we need this song? Is this just a great song that I have enjoyed? Or will it be relevant and add value to our times of worship as a congregation? Many times we have a wonderful personal moment with a song but it could be just that.... a personal moment.

Ask: Can we use this song?

If you feel the song is relevant to the congregation, spend time listening to the song. Are the melody and lyrics easy to sing? Are the lyrics theologically correct? This is always a great

opportunity to send the song to your worship overseer or to an elder to get their input.

Excite your team

Now that you feel it is time to bring the song to your worship team, send your team a recording of the song. Get your team excited. An excited team will help you prepare the way for the Sunday. Remember, legally we cannot change lyrics and melodies, however the arrangement found on the CD or YouTube clip almost always need to be adjusted to work for the team you have and their specific instruments and abilities. Be creative! Remember the song is there to serve us, we do not serve the song.

Practice the song

Practice the song with your team until they are confident with it. Encourage your team to practice on their own and if possible even introduce the songs to their community groups during the week. When a team plays a song with confidence the congregation feels more confident and the song is carried better even though it is new.

Work with your elders

We must never assume it's a good week to introduce a song. It is important to communicate with your elders before the Sunday service. The congregation feel safe when they see the elders are aware of what is happening and are supportive of it. We may be excited about the song but if the elders want to pause it, follow them.

Introduce the song

A great way to introduce a song to your congregation is to teach the song at the beginning of the worship, before you get too deep into a flow. Communicate to the congregation that it is a new song and introduce it section by section. It can be tricky to introduce a slow worship song at the beginning of a set as the people might not click straight into that "deeper place". One way to help them is to just introduce the chorus initially, then later when you do the song again, add the verses.

One at a time

Do not introduce too many new songs too quickly. One new song in a meeting is a lot, even one new song a month would be plenty. If you bring the songs too thick and fast the congregation won't have time to really connect with the new material. Pace yourself.

Play it again Sam

Repetition is a great tool. Work together as worship leaders within your congregation to repeat songs over a Sunday or two or even three. This will help the congregation learn the songs and get everyone more comfortable (and not so dependent on reading the words).

Use social media

If the song you are introducing has appeared on the world wide web, share the links across

social media platforms that your congregation member frequent. This will help familiarise guys with the new material and helps support songwriters by directing people to their pages.

Local is lekker!*

Lastly, our Heavenly Father has anointed song writers all over the world to create incredible songs. There are experienced writers out there and we are blessed with their gifts. However, within our own churches, there are also songs waiting to be birthed. Songs with a specific flavour and message for the season our congregations are in. Songs that the Creator wants to bring to fill the atmosphere in your area. Speak to your elders and leaders, learn from them what God is saying. Write your own songs based on the heart and message your leaders have for this season. Write on your own, write in groups and once you start writing, just keep writing. We don't often see or hear about the amount of songs well-known artists write before recording them on an album, or before one of their songs makes it on the top 10 list. Just keep writing. *(lekker: South African, informal, adj. – good, pleasant)