Songs For Now

Adam Hellyer, Chad Lahana 12 May 2016



Around 700BC, the prophet Isaiah wrote these words: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me…' (Isaiah 61:1). In time, Isaiah's words joined the writings of other prophets. Jewish teachers would read them in synagogues, and everyone would say, 'Ah yes, here Isaiah speaks of himself.' That is how he was understood for hundreds of years. Around 30AD, a carpenter's son walks into the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth. He takes the scroll of Isaiah and begins to read, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Isaiah 61:1,2a). What He said next changed the way that passage was understood for the rest of time. He said, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing' (Luke 4:21 ESV). Jesus was the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy.

> …our songs need to reflect what God is doing in the times we are in.

Choosing Worship Songs for Now

In the same way that certain Scriptures, words and phrases take on new significance in different

seasons, so our songs need to reflect what God is doing in the times we are in. This is true in the space of a single meeting. It is also true within a longer season in the life of your church. Don't just arrive to lead with a list of your favourite songs. We need to flow with what God is doing now.

- If God is moving in deep conviction and repentance, it may not be the moment to sing 'Dancing in the River'.
- If demons are being driven out, and signs, wonders and salvations are breaking out in your meetings, then it may not be necessary to sing, 'Come with Your Power, Lord'.
- If the presence of God is evident, we may not need to sing, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come'.

So how do we find the songs to sing? How do we know which season we are in?

1. Spend Time with God

If you spend time with God, you will begin to pick up His heart. That's not to say you will hear perfectly. We know in part and prophesy in part. But you will get in tune and that will be a good starting point. Remember, not everything you get from God needs to be shared. If He highlights Scripture or speaks to you prophetically, you don't necessarily need to read it out next time you lead worship. Just like a musician practices scales in order to play well, so there are spiritual disciplines we need that are not for public display.

2. Talk to Other Worship Leaders

It is also good to talk with other worship leaders from your own congregation or other churches in the same apostolic field. Ask them what songs they have sung that have 'had God on them'. Remember, it's not important who finds the song – it's not a competition! Sometimes the best thing you can do is use the same songs they sang last week. If those are the songs God is using, you'd be crazy not to get on board.

3. Work with the Elders

As musicians, we sometimes think worship is 'our part' of the meeting. And we get frustrated when our elders 'interfere'! Of course, we don't say exactly that. We say, 'I felt the worship could have gone longer today', or 'It seemed there were a lot of prophetic words this morning'. But what we mean is, 'I was on a roll and he cut me off', or, 'I was just getting to the good bit and he gave the microphone to Aunt Ethel.' But the elders are the fathers in the church. They are responsible for everything, including worship. Ours is a delegated authority; we need to work humbly with them. So, get to know your elders. Position yourself to be taught by them. Elders can be busy people, so don't try once and give up. Press in. You can initiate times together; don't wait for an invitation. Don't be intimidated. Elders are not The-Man-of-God™, they are friends and co-

labourers who, like you, are working for the glory of God. So ask your elders for direction. Ask them what God has been saying to them. Once you've picked your songs, show them to the elder who is leading and be open to their comments and suggestions.

Part of the Puzzle

Remember, song choice is not an exact science. We see in part and prophesy in part. You hearing God is only one piece of the puzzle. Listen to God. Listen to others. Work with your elders. Don't be rigid with your song list, give yourself plenty of options. Trust God and follow Him as you lead the bride into worshipping Him.