



*six essentials of song*

at Seven Mile Road

# 1

## God and gospel focused

Why:

The Triune God is the great and glorious object of our worship. He is holy and worthy of all praise. All goodness, beauty, and truth in the universe springs from Him. He created and governs all things, and has, in love, redeemed us sinners through the gospel. His person, His work, and His promises are what we hope in and why we sing.

And so:

- God, not us, should be the unmistakable focus of our singing
- A sense of “rejoicing in and responding to” God and the gospel should mark our singing
- While our emotions should be moved as we sing, generating emotional experiences is not our aim
- We foster the sense that God is the gracious ground of our ability to do music and song

What we are not saying:

- We can never sing a song with “I” as the subject of any sentence
- Songs where we cry out to God are necessarily inappropriate

Songs/Lyrics That Exemplify This Essential:

- *Is He Worthy?*, Andrew Peterson
- *Look And See*, The Village
- *Jesus True And Only*, Austin Stone
- *Made Alive*, Citizens & Saints
- *Thy Mercy*, John Stocker
- *Only A Holy God*, CityAlight

# 2

## lyrical orthodoxy

Why:

God has revealed Himself not only in the person and work of Christ, but also in the words of Scripture, which govern everything we believe and animate everything we do. Sound doctrine grounds and fuels life-giving worship, so all the words we sing should be shaped by and aligned with God's words.

And so:

- We avoid songs with lyrics that are not in accord with the clear teaching of Scripture
- The great doctrines of Scripture should find lyrical outlet in our singing
- We publish on-screen Scripture references that have shaped a specific song's lyrics
- We avoid or amend lyrics that are potentially confusing or would require lengthy explanation/definition

What we are not saying:

- We will only sing Psalms
- Every song needs to neatly mirror a specific text of Scripture

Songs/Lyrics That Exemplify This Essential:

- *In Christ Alone*, Keith and Kristen Getty
- *Soli Deo Gloria*, Seven Mile Road
- *Before the Throne of God Above*, Charitie Lees Bancroft

# 3

## *thematic variety*

Why:

The Psalms, which are both the prayer-book *and* songbook of the people of God, are filled with variety. This is true for at least two reasons, First, God's character is gloriously multifaceted, and He is to be praised for all His varied perfections and actions with songs that are suitable. Second, as God's people living in a redeemed yet fundamentally broken and often harsh world, we need an anthology of songs that give appropriate voice to all the experiences, emotions, and aims of the gospel life.

And so:

- On a given Sunday, we may sing hymns, praise songs, fight songs, laments, declarations, confessions, loud songs, quiet songs, long songs, short songs, etc.

What we are not saying:

- Every Sunday needs to be perfectly balanced in its genres employed

Songs/Lyrics That Exemplify This Essential:

- *You Are My Shield*, My Soul Among Lions
- *Glorious Love*, Seven Mile Road
- *How Long, Oh Lord*, My Soul Among Lions
- *I Will Wait For You*, Shane and Shane
- *Rescuer*, Rend Collective
- *Carry Me*, My Soul Among Lions

# 4

## *humble zeal*

Why:

Throughout Scripture, those who stand in the presence of God worship Him with humility, awe, and abandon. (See: Miriam, Isaiah, David, Paul, Silas, the woman of the city, etc.) We are not disembodied brains, but embodied creatures called to worship with mind, soul, and body. Our manner of singing should fit the grandeur of our gospel.

And so:

- We sing loud and free
- Lifting hands, kneeling, clapping, etc. are appropriate actions in worship
- Arranging and leading of songs should model this while not detracting from primary goal of having the congregation singing

What we are not saying

- Worship is about getting your individual groove on
- The louder you sing, or the higher your life your hands, the holier you are
- We're good with overly expressive responses that distract or confuse new people

Songs/Lyrics That Exemplify This Essential:

- *Rejoice*, Dustin Kensrue
- *How Majestic*, Citizens & Saints
- *Marvelous Light*, Charlie Hall
- *In Tenderness He Sought Me*, W. Spencer Walton

# 5

## *masculine and feminine piety*

Why:

Our dream at Seven Mile Road is to have men and women rightly related and fully engaged in the life and mission of the church. This means fostering a culture where both masculine and feminine piety are encouraged and celebrated, including in how we sing together. As God has assigned men responsibility in home and church for loving and leading those under their care in good, gospel directions, we want strong and godly men taking responsibility for our song life, and strong and godly women partnering with them. All boats rise when this happens.

And so:

- We train and mobilize strong and godly men to bear responsibility with humility and without apology
- We train and mobilize strong and godly women to partner with them with humility and without fear
- Both men and women who visit should feel welcome and safe
- Musicians adorn the gospel by embracing their sexuality in appearance and demeanor (i.e. no effeminacy in our men or immodesty in our women)

What we are not saying:

- Our women cannot vocally or musically lead songs
- We enforce a legalistic dress code

Songs/Lyrics That Exemplify This Essential:

- *You Are My Vision*, Eleanor Hull
- *Foolishness*, Seven Mile Road
- *It Is Well*, Horatio Spafford
- *Man Of Sorrows*, Philip Paul Bliss

# 6

## *everybody sings*

Why:

Song at Seven Mile Road is a choir, not a concert. When God saves us through Christ, he welcomes us into a community that lives and dies and *sings* together. The gospel is for all of us, musically inclined or not, and we're all called to respond in repentance, faith, and song! A strong Sunday is not one where every note was properly hit, every instrument perfectly tuned, or every emotion effectively tapped. It's one where everybody sings.

And so:

- All our lyrics are accessible to the average Bostonian
- Our keys are appropriate for men and women
- Acapella singing is weaved throughout our liturgy

What we are not saying:

- Every song must be a campfire song with three chords and in C Major

Songs/Lyrics That Exemplify This Essential:

- *Come As You Are*, Crowder
- *Imagine*, Seven Mile Road
- *How Deep The Father's Love For Us*, Stuart Townend
- *Good, Good Father*, Pat Barrett and Tony Brown