

The Songs We Sing

The Twenty-Year Rule

"If someone grows up in our church for 20 years, how well will they know God from what we sing?"

Three Pastoral Roles of Worship Leaders

Shepherd (Eph 4:11-16) – Protect the flock through careful song selection
 Servant (John 13:12-16) – Lay down preferences to serve the congregation
 Farmer (1 Cor 3:5-9) – Plant seeds of truth that grow over time

Framework for Song Selection

Criterion	Key Questions
1. Is it True?	Does it contradict Scripture? Is the theology accurate? (Non-negotiable)
2. Objective or Subjective?	Does it teach truth about God (objective) or express our response (subjective)? Balance both.
3. What's the Function?	Gathering? Adoration? Confession? Assurance? Instruction? Commission? Match song to moment.
4. Is it Congregational?	Does it encourage participation or observation? Can the average person sing this?
5. Is it a Fit?	Does it match your congregation's demographics, maturity, musical culture, and current teaching?
6. Right Arrangement?	Range, melody, rhythm, key—does it facilitate participation or highlight performers?

Best Practices

- Build a core repertoire – Aim for 20-30 songs your church knows deeply
- Balance old and new – Honor hymns and embrace quality modern worship
- Repeat as needed – It takes 6-8 exposures for a song to become familiar
- Get feedback – Listen to your congregation and pastoral team regularly
- Discover new (and old) songs – Continuously explore and expand your repertoire

Arrangement Elements Checklist

- ☐ Range: One-octave range is best
- ☐ Melody: Stepwise motion and predictable patterns
- ☐ Rhythm: Natural word stress, minimal syncopation
- ☐ Key: Works for both vocalists and instrumentalists
- ☐ Quality: Does it enhance or diminish the song?
- ☐ Resources: Parts, tracks, rehearsal guides available?

**"The songs we sing today become the theology our people carry tomorrow.
 Choose wisely, sing deeply, and watch God's truth take root."**