

Notes on Song Leading

"Let all things be done decently and in order." - 1 Corinthians 14:40

The Song Leader's job is to **lead** the congregation in singing, according to the above scripture.

While nice, it is **not** necessary that the song leader have a loud or beautiful voice. The amplifier and the congregation will supply these things - if they are **led** properly.

The song leader's job is to **LEAD**, to show where to go in singing. The song leader must:

- 1) **Choose** songs appropriate for the lesson, Lord's Supper, invitation etc.
- 2) **Announce** the songs clearly and positively
- 3) Positively **start** the songs at the right pitch (high/low)
- 4) Lead the songs at the right **tempo** (fast/slow)
- 5) Lead cheerfully and **confidently** so people follow in the same manner

1) The most important note is the **first** one! If you don't do *anything* else, start each verse positively and clearly. If you **don't** do that, you will **not** be leading the singing, someone else will. And, *that* is **not** what's meant by "decently and in order".

2) If you **start** positively **wrong --- stop**, and then start over. Do not be afraid to stop the singing if you've started a song off too low or too high in pitch. It happens; it's not a big deal. If you make a mistake, like leading a verse twice, or mixing the words up, don't worry about it, smile and keep on singing (see #8). People will understand - they're glad to have you leading.

3) Let people **see your mouth!** Keep your head up. Move your eyes to look down at the song book, not your head. Don't hide behind the song book. Keep your book down in front of you, or to one side, not in your face. Don't sing into the song book! Sing into the microphone and out to the congregation.

4) **Open your mouth wide!** Mouth your words. Use your lips. The best and easiest way for people to **follow** a song leader is for them to **watch** his mouth. Give them something to watch. If people only follow your voice, they are likely to **drag** behind. Don't worry about waving your arms in time to the music. That's nice but not necessary. OPEN your mouth WIDE and **sing!** It's easy and effective.

5) Use the **microphone!** The microphone is your friend! Sing into it, it will save your voice and help people hear and follow you. If people are singing off key, or differently from what you're singing, use the mike – they will adjust and follow you. Don't worry about being wrong, you are to **lead** - sing it the way you want and people will be glad to follow as long as you're confident.

6) **Announce** song numbers at least twice before each song. Say it both ways, "Song One Hundred Thirty Four", then "Song One, Three, Four". Give people time to find it.

7) If you are **not** going to lead a **verse** of a song (especially the LAST verse), it's best to announce it before hand, "Song 134. We'll sing verses 1 and 3." If you forget to do that or while singing you decide not to sing a verse, towards the end of a verse, hold up your hand and fingers with the number of the **next** verse to sing. Open palm fingers together for verse 6. If you're not going to sing the **LAST** verse, hold your closed hand up, with no fingers extended. Close your songbook and hold it against your chest so people can see you are finished and are going to stop. If they're really following, they won't start the next verse if **you** don't.

8) **Smile!** As you sing. Remember, you are leading. If people see you smiling while you're singing they'll know you are **confident** and they in turn will be encouraged to smile, follow and enjoy the singing more themselves.

9) (Advanced, be **careful** of this) **LISTEN!** Blend in. All good singers listen to those around them and try to blend in, so no one individual's voice can be distinguished. Your first job however is to **lead** and not **follow** the congregation. But a good leader does get **feedback** from those following him. So, listen to yourself and the congregation. With your voice, build up those parts that are lacking and cut back and blend in with the parts everyone is doing well. This is what is meant by singing with "one voice" - it sounds like one voice, no one person's voice can be distinguished. This is good.