

SELECTING THE RIGHT TUNE (1)

Introductory comments by John de la Haye

Practical hints at this stage if not confident!

1. Take time to sing a couple of verses through to your chosen tune - check the metre is right, and check the character of the tune.
2. Make sure that you know the tune thoroughly - the front of the church is not the place for sight-reading or guessing! But if you get a genuine blank moment when up at the front, don't be anxious - it has happened to all of us at some time. It is not a disaster if you need a little prompt occasionally - we are human.
3. Enjoy the singing, and enter into the psalm - don't be detached from the service. You too are praising God - you are not there as a technician, but as a worshipper in spirit and in truth.
4. Don't be put off by strange names for tunes - look at the actual melody, the tune itself, e.g. DOMINUS REGIT ME - sounds dreadful, but a lovely tune! Called that by J. B. Dykes because he composed it for the hymn, "The King of Love my shepherd is...", and the tune is named from the old Latin heading of Psalm 23 in the Book of Common Prayer. So at least to Anglicans, all is clear and plain!
5. Use the microphone if you have one (it doesn't bite), and watch the speed and pitch of your opening notes - hard to change this afterward (e.g. with SUSSEX).
6. Try to master some more of the 10.10.10.10 tunes; don't sing everything to EVENTIDE, as this is frequently used at funerals for the hymn, "Abide with me..." Learn CHILTON FOLIAT, ELLERS, WOODLANDS - great tunes!
7. Be willing to accept feedback, and to learn from others. Talk to your minister or preacher - don't exclude him. Arrange a time with him for the congregation to learn new tunes; e.g. Psalm 119 (8) in *Sing Psalms* - three tunes, all new, and no others fit. Or do like John Calvin, and train the children first!
8. Write in your psalm book - note down any good ideas for fresh matching of tunes with psalms. You will soon forget otherwise!
9. If you stand up to sing a tune, and another tune comes out of your mouth, keep going unless the metre is actually wrong! No-one may even notice...and do the same if the congregation hijacks your intended tune.
10. No link between psalm and tune is unchangeable - try Psalm 100 (1) to DUKE STREET, or Psalm 121 to ST. COLUMBA. Sometimes the way we sing a psalm needs a change, and the effect is refreshing! Enjoy the longer tunes, such as HYFRYDOL (8.7.8.7.D) to Psalm 146 in *Sing Psalms*, and BLAENWERN to Ps. 85.

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