



SMALL GROUP TOPIC FOR SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

# SINGING & WORSHIP

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

Dear Facilitators,

The small group content for the months of September and October will be the *Sing!* book, and we have created this facilitator guide to help you lead these small group discussions.

Content provided for each session includes:

- An icebreaker
- Introductory thoughts
- Important takeaways
- Additional questions – please take note that the *Sing!* book has questions at the end of each chapter, which you should begin with and then use the additional questions as needed.

At the end of the *Sing!* book is additional content that your small group participants can read and discuss as it is relevant to them.

Please schedule your small group sessions according to your local calendars with the following suggestion (*one Wednesday each month would remain open for the midweek divine service*):

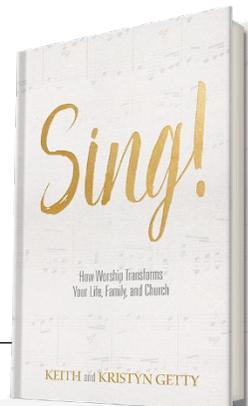
### September – 3 sessions

- Prelude & Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3

### October – 4 sessions

- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 6
- Chapter 7 & Postlude

We wish you joy as you and your small group discover how singing can transform our worship, our lives, our families, and our church.



# **Sing!** Facilitator Guide

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## **WEEK 1** – PRELUDE AND CHAPTER 1

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

- If you could listen to one album for the rest of your life, what would it be?

### **Introductory thoughts:**

*Music is a unique and powerful gift from God. It has a special way of lodging itself in the heart and soul, which is why most people can tell you their favorite artist or album, and can be transported to a particular time and place immediately upon hearing a song.*

*Music in the church can be a very contentious topic. Because people feel so strongly about it, the lyrics, style, and instrumentation can divide churches. In our study of Sing!, we hope to learn what's most important in congregational singing, and how we can glorify God and grow to be more like Christ through our singing.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from the chapters.

### **Important takeaways from the chapters:**

- This book is about singing together as a church in a way that impacts your whole life.
- The Church has been, is, and always should and can be a joyfully singing Church.
- Though maybe misunderstood, regularly a bone of contention, and often under-practiced, congregational singing is one of the greatest and most beautiful tools we have been given to declare God's "excellences."
- Christian singing begins with the heart (Eph. 5:19).
- Your heavenly Father cares whether and what you sing, but He does not mind how well you sing.
- Your voice may not be of professional standard, but it is of confessional standard.
- Our singing is not *like* prayer—it *is* prayer.
- We shouldn't sing primarily because we love singing, or keep quiet because we don't. We should sing because we love the One who made us, formed us, and enables us to sing.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### **Additional questions:**

- On page 4, it's mentioned that, in congregational singing, believers sing truth together. Give some examples of hymns that contain godly truths, and discuss these truths with your group.
- There are five goals for this study:
  - To discover why we sing and the overwhelming joy that comes with singing.
  - To consider how singing impacts our hearts and minds and all of our lives.
  - To cultivate a culture of family singing in our daily home life.
  - To equip our churches for wholeheartedly singing to the Lord and one another.
  - To inspire us to see congregational singing as a radical witness to the world.Which of these goals are you most excited about?

# Sing! Facilitator Guide

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## WEEK 2 - CHAPTER 2

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

- If you could play any instrument in the world, what would you play?

### Introductory thoughts:

*The Bible includes more than four hundred references to singing, and more than fifty direct commands to praise God by singing to and about Him. Obviously, the writers of Scripture saw singing to God as an important part of our Christian life!*

*Commands can be challenging, but it relieves the pressure to know that we were created to sing. We are all singers. Regardless of our ability to carry a note, God made us to sing along with all of creation, and He cares far more about the posture of our heart than our talent.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from this chapter.

### Important takeaways from this chapter:

- Just as we are told to study the scriptures, to pray, to give, to take communion, so we are commanded to sing. Our spiritual health depends on it.
- In congregational singing, sometimes we are going to sing songs that we may not have chosen because they are not our favorite. We need to be willing to lay down our own tastes for the good of the wider assembly.
- Colossians 3:16 says that we should *let the word of Christ dwell in us richly*. One of the ways the word of Jesus can dwell in us richly is for us to sing it to one another.
- It is hard—impossible, in fact—to sing what you are excited about in your spirit and grateful for in your heart in a way that is tepid, tentative, and withdrawn. Deeply felt thanksgiving produces a sound from our voices that is robust and enthusiastic.
- Singing, as with all outward expressions of our worship, will never save us. But singing will lead us to the One who will.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### Additional questions:

- On page 14, it's mentioned that we shouldn't just sing; we should also think while we're singing. What are some things that we should be thinking about while we sing?
- What does it mean that we should sing the Lord's praise "in the assembly of the saints?" (Psalm 149:1)
- Take a moment and read "Our Singing Savior," page 19. How does it make you feel to know that your Savior also sang? What should our response be to this?

# Sing! Facilitator Guide

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## WEEK 3 - CHAPTER 3

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

- If you could share a meal with one musician, who would that musician be?

### Introductory thoughts:

*C.S. Lewis said, "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation." This certainly rings true in our everyday lives—we praise the people, the sports teams, the artists, the politicians, and the possessions that we love!*

*We also, then, ought to praise the most praiseworthy person in the world: Jesus Christ. His gospel, the good news that He has saved us, compels us to sing.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from this chapter.

### Important takeaways from this chapter:

- We are a singing people because the gospel of the Lord Jesus *compels* us to sing.
- Worship isn't primarily about music, techniques, songs, or methodologies. It's about hearts. It's about what and whom we love more than anything.
- Worship comes as a response to revelation.
- It goes against the grain of how God created our humanity for us to keep from praising all that is praiseworthy, to keep quiet about what we are pleased with. Since God is most worthy of our praise, we will respond not only by knowing we should praise Him, but by feeling that we cannot help but praise Him.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### Additional questions:

- What is it about the gospel of the Lord Jesus that compels us to sing?
- Review the salvation songs of Scripture (pages 26-30). Choose one of these inspiring examples, and discuss why it inspires you.
- It says on page 24 that we were not just freed *from* something, we were freed *for* something. What is it that we were freed for? How can we do these things?
- Share an example of a revelation in your life that compelled you to worship God.

# Sing! Facilitator Guide

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## WEEK 4 - CHAPTER 4

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

What is your favorite hymn or worship song?

### Introductory thoughts:

*We sing because we're created to, commanded to, and compelled to. And when we sing great truths, great things happen. Christ-filled, Spirit-prompted singing moves out in concentric circles changing your own head and mind...changing your family...changing your church...and changing this world.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from this chapter.

### Important takeaways from this chapter:

- Throughout the centuries, the people of God have, in huge measure, learned their faith through what they sang together.
- Singing takes Sunday's truths into Monday.
  - The songs we sing on Sunday provide the soundtrack for our week. Singing files the messages the lyrics convey in our minds and hearts.
- Singing sustains you in every season of life.
  - Songs of faith are powerful tools in which beautiful truth set to memorable music inspires a deeper, sustaining faith.
- Singing reminds you of what God has done in your life.
  - As you remember God's faithfulness in your past, so often etched in your hearts through a song, you are inspired and equipped to face the ups and downs of the week.
- Singing keeps your mind on eternity.
  - We need our singing to be filled with the unending story of the hope of heaven and its very real presence through the moments of everyday life.
- We need to grow our appetite for good soul food—for congregational singing.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### Additional questions:

- How do you incorporate the hymns of the church into your personal life?
- Think of or find a song/hymn that gives a broad and deep picture of the character and nature of God. Discuss the facets of God's nature that are revealed in this song.
- It mentions on page 51 that we have to grow our appetite for congregational singing. How can this be accomplished? What are some practical steps that you can take?

# Sing! Facilitator Guide

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## WEEK 5 - CHAPTER 5

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

- Describe a musical experience that had a significant impact on you.

### Introductory thoughts:

*The Christian life is both individual and corporate. God calls us alone, and we will stand before Him on judgment day alone (in Christ), but every step of the way in between is corporate—we live our lives with fellow believers.*

*Singing, as an integral part of the Christian life, is similar. We should sing individually, but perhaps more importantly, we should sing with others—with our families and our local church.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from this chapter.

### Important takeaways from this chapter:

- The church should be a feasting place for singable songs, and the appetite for it is nurtured at home.
- Let singing the gospel be to your family what skiing incredibly early and speaking multiple languages is to the Swiss. We need to make singing Bible truths second nature to our children, a “second language” in our homes.
- At the heart of encouraging your kids to sing is having a heart for singing the songs yourself.
- “At home” singing/worship experiences are foundational spaces for the singing we do on Sundays. They link our personal homes with our church home.
- If you are disheartened by the trends of the music in the wider church at the moment, remember: some of the people who will write the songs, choose the songs, and lead the singing in our churches tomorrow are in our care and training today.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### Additional questions:

- Discuss the ten practical ideas for getting kids to sing the gospel listed on pages 63-69. Are there any that stand out to you?
- How could your church help your family incorporate singing into the daily fabric of life?
- See page 62, the first paragraph. It says here that our “at home” singing/worship experiences link our personal homes with our church home. Take a moment to ponder and discuss the beauty of this thought. What else do these “at home” experiences do, as mentioned in the same paragraph?
- The following ancient motto is mentioned on page 68: “Give me a child until they are seven and I will show you the man.” What do you think this means?

# Sing! Facilitator Guide

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## WEEK 6 - CHAPTER 6

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

- What's your favorite time of day to listen to music, and why?

### Introductory thoughts:

*We are forged together through our singing together. The key word in that sentence is together. We live in a time when the importance of music in church has been elevated greatly. But at the same time, we are in danger of lowering the importance we place on singing together.*

*So many of the instructions given to God's people are to be worked out in community together. Strong, heartfelt congregational singing is a striking expression of this, of the Holy Spirit at work amongst us, and through us, as we sing of the very things we share as followers of Christ.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from this chapter.

### Important takeaways from this chapter:

- We are forged together through our singing together.
- When you sing, look around. Encourage others with what you are singing, and expect to be encouraged by the fact that there are others singing with you and to you.
- You benefit from the church only as you serve the church.
- We all share the responsibility of our singing together. Our singing (even when it joyfully falls off pitch) should always, unapologetically contribute to our sense of family and community.
- It is most often the simple thing done well and sincerely in church that will make the most significant impression.
- Biblically rich content in songs, sung by people who look like they mean what they are saying, helps teach the gospel as something that is credible and powerful.
- Not all singing churches are healthy churches, but all healthy churches are singing churches.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### Additional questions:

- How are we forged together through our singing together?
- Consider the quote, "Not all singing churches are healthy churches, but all healthy churches are singing churches." Discuss what you think this means.
- It's mentioned on page 82 that singing helps us put on our spiritual armor. How do you think it does this? What is our spiritual armor?

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## **WEEK 7** -CHAPTER 7 AND POSTLUDE

\*Please note that the following material is meant to supplement your small group discussion. You do not need to use all of this material. Please use what you feel would be most fitting for your group, and edifying for your discussion.

Icebreaker:

- Has there ever been a time when you got “caught” singing? (i.e. when you thought you were home alone, when someone caught you in your car, etc.)

### **Introductory thoughts:**

*There are several ways to witness in the Christian life: we witness to unbelievers by sharing the gospel with them in conversations; we witness to the character of God by living Christ-like lives; we witness to the coming kingdom by our corporate lives in the local church.*

*We also can, and should, witness by the way we sing. Whether we know it or not, our singing witnesses to something. Ideally, the words we sing will witness to the gospel, and the enthusiasm, joy, and passion with which we sing will witness to the power of Jesus Christ.*

Ask the group for their takeaways from these chapters.

### **Important takeaways from these chapters:**

- Your song may be used to save a soul. Sing it prayerfully.
- The sight and sound of a congregation singing praise to God together is a radical witness in a culture that rejects God and embraces individualism.
- The gospel is the church’s central lyrical distinctive. We should not be shy about it. As you stand and sing in your church this Sunday, you do not know who is listening, and you can never imagine what the Lord might be doing.
- We must actually believe and live the truths we sing, otherwise what we sing can make us hypocritical.
- This book has a very simple aim: that you would sing truth, and sing it as though it is true.

\*Please note that there are questions at the end of each chapter that should be used first.

### **Additional questions:**

- What is the difference between a powerful witness and a damaging witness when it comes to our singing?
- Why do you think there is such a temptation for churches to diminish the value of congregational singing? What can your congregation do to promote it more?
- How has this book changed your thinking and perspective when it comes to singing and its impact on worship? What is your biggest takeaway(s)?
- What changes will you make personally to be more engaged in congregational singing?