

Sanctuary First

A PLACE TO BE

Songs of Sanctuary - August 2018

(29 July - 1 September)

Songs are a kind of sanctuary. They are a place we can go, even if it's just for a few minutes, to find some reassurance, inspiration, or peace. They transport us from our everyday concerns. Melody, rhythm, and poetry have a way of bypassing our defences and reaching directly to our emotions - making us dance, jump, laugh, and cry. A song is a place where you can be yourself, and remember parts of yourself you had forgotten.

Many of the Bible readings this month centre around the life of David, a songwriter who embraced the power of song to tap into deep feelings of triumph and anxiety, hope and frustration, delight and anguish. He was a man in search of sanctuary, who didn't always find it, but never gave up the search. There are also several readings from the Psalms, a collection of songs and poems - many of them written by David himself - full of rich, complex emotion.

This month we are going to invite you to read the Bible with your headphones in. Each day there is a reading and a prompt inviting you to find a song that evokes the themes explored in the passage. We actively encourage you to turn to the songs that you love, that have soundtracked key moments in your life. Songs that remind you of different times and people. This is not about finding 'worthy' worship songs and hymns that spell things out neatly... we are asking you to consider the earthy songs you know and love - that have been there for you through the ups and downs of life.

The Bible is full of the kind of people pop songs are written about: flawed, desperate, quirky souls full of longing and regret, heartache and desire. In other words - people like you and me.

So the challenge to our prayer writers, and to everyone following along with our Daily Worship, is to find messy broken songs written by messy, broken people that are designed to be listened to by messy, broken people! Cast the net far and wide - gospel, jazz, rock, indie, hip-hop, musical theatre, metal, country - whatever it is that speaks to your soul and reaches your heart. Open the Bible and press play.

Each week of the theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme.

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
29 July	A broken Hallelujah	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Samuel 11: 1-15 2. Psalm 14 3. 2 Kings 4: 42-44 4. Psalm 145: 10-18 5. Ephesians 3: 14-21 6. John 6: 1-21 7. Judges 16: 28 	<p>Leonard Cohen's haunting 'Hallelujah' directly references 2 Samuel 11 in the second verse and uses a range of other biblical imagery, including a reference to Judges 16, when Samson allows his hair to be cut. Cohen sees these moments of profound weakness or moral failing and despair not as a means of cutting ourselves off from the divine but as a means of glimpsing it.</p> <p>We are inviting our writers and readers to choose a song for each day that relates to each reading. Below are prompts to get you started.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A song about human frailty. 2. A protest song. 3. A song with a surprising twist. 4. A song that encourages you. 5. A song that changed how you think about love. 6. A song about something amazing. 7. A song about a final stand/last chance/a shot at redemption.
05 August	Don't shoot the messenger!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a 2. Psalm 51: 1-12 3. Exodus 16: 2-4, 9-15 4. Psalm 78: 23-29 5. Ephesians 4: 1-16 6. John 6: 24-35 7. Zechariah 7: 9-10 	<p>In the first reading Nathan has a rather difficult message to convey. Songs are often used as a disarming way of tackling difficult subjects.</p> <p>We are inviting our writers and readers to choose a song for each day that relates to each reading. Below are prompts to get you started.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't shoot the messenger! A song about a difficult/thorny topic. 2. A song that features despair, or that you listen to when you are despairing. 3. A song with lyrics about moaning/grumbling/complaining. 4. A song about a longing that has been met. 5. A song about growing up, and maturing. 6. A song about food. Can you find a song you like that specifically references bread in one of the lyrics? 7. A song that stands up for the vulnerable against the powerful.

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
12 August	Strange times	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Samuel: 18: 5-9, 15, 31-33 2. Psalm 130 3. 1 Kings 19: 4-8 4. Psalm 34: 1-8 5. Ephesians 4:25-5:2 6. John 6: 35, 41-51 7. Isaiah 1:17 	<p>Songs are often mini-stories that compress experiences, relationships, and whole lives into three minute chunks. One line or verse can sum up years of feeling. As a result, songs often hinge on key decisions, actions, or insights that then propel the rest of the action.</p> <p>These Bible readings find people confronting key moments of decision or realisation in their lives.</p> <p>We are inviting our writers and readers to choose a song for each day that relates to each reading. Below are prompts to get you started.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A song about loss. 2. A song that features the protagonist's desperation. 3. A song about giving up, or finding strength - or both. 4. A song about change or transformation. 5. A song about forgiveness, or anger, or putting pain behind you. 6. When Jesus said he was the bread of life, some people loved and others thought, "Aye right." A song about scepticism, doubt, suspicion. 7. A song where someone decides to intervene on behalf of someone else.
19 August	Growing pains	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 Kings 3: 5-10 2. Psalm 111 3. Proverbs 9: 1-6 4. Psalm 34: 9-14 5. Ephesians 5: 15-20 6. John 6: 51-58 7. Micah 6: 8 	<p>A lot of music, pop music in particular, centres around the concerns and anxieties of the young - the struggles found seeking a partner, proving yourself, or wising up through life's lessons.</p> <p>We are inviting our writers and readers to choose a song for each day that relates to each reading. Below are prompts to get you started.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A song about being young. 2. Thinking about how young we are in comparison to the creator God. A song of virtuoso composition - a technically difficult or complex arrangement, intricate in construction, that showcases the creativity of a created people. 3. A song about growing in maturity. 4. A song that speaks of a desire for peace. 5. A song about getting wise, learning a lesson, 'coming out the other side'. 6. A song about sacrifice. 7. A song about sussing out the fundamental things that matter in life.

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
26 August	Songs of sanctuary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 Kings 8: 6, 22-30 2. Psalm 84 3. Joshua 24: 1-2a, 14-18 4. Psalm 34: 15-22 5. Ephesians 6: 10-20 6. John 6: 56-69 7. Psalm 63 	<p>As the theme draws to a close, we turn specifically to think about being in the sanctuary. Those moments when we rest in the presence of God.</p> <p>We are inviting our writers and readers to choose a song for each day that relates to each reading. Below are prompts to get you started.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A song about being in the sanctuary - being in a holy place, feeling 'at one', or 'in tune'. 2. A song about finding solace, respite, or rest. 3. Joshua quotes Bob Dylan here saying, "You gotta serve somebody..." a song about service, dedication, cause, purpose. 4. A song about the brokenhearted, about heartache. 5. Movies often have a 'fight song' that moment when the protagonist is psyching themselves up (think: training montage). Runners often make playlists with songs that help them push that bit further, that bit harder. This armour of God riff is a great fight song. Choose a song that psyches you up, that pushes you on. 6. Being in the sanctuary of God, being able to speak directly to the Lord of life is incredible. A song about awe, wonderment, or amazement. 7. 'I have seen you in the sanctuary...' A song of longing.