

Have you ever thought, *Why we sing?* A huge growth in community singing groups across Britain after Gareth Malone started *The Choir*.

Several studies have demonstrated the **health** benefits of singing: aerobic activity which increases oxygen in the blood stream, exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has **social** benefits of bringing people together who enjoy community and belonging. Singing also has **psychological** benefits of reducing stress levels through the action of the endocrine system which is linked to our sense of emotional well-being.

Studies have also demonstrated, singing helps us live longer, and one study has reported higher levels of immune system proteins in the saliva of choristers after performing a complex Beethoven masterwork.

We find singing across all religions, but there is evidence that as Christians, we enjoy a far richer repertoire of tones, styles, formats of singing than most other religions.

The early church inherited the Psalms from the Hebrews, but had to learn the value and importance of singing. How do you use this collection of worship material when the Temple is not available.

Paul tells the church at Collosae, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, **singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**”* (Colossians 3:16)

He also tells the church at Ephesus, to *“be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart...”*

Let me leave you with the single most important reason why we are **instructed** to sing and why we should sing: when we sing, we allow the Word of God to be embedded, implanted in us, and we proclaim the Word of God to those around us.

The Psalms and many of the hymns and songs, are rich in theology, teaching us about the person of God and His purpose for us through Christ.

Songs and tunes are easy to remember. Many of us may not remember all five verses of a popular hymn, but we might well remember the refrain, or the opening lines.

When we need to be assured of God's presence, in times of difficulty, need, and joy, a few lines of a hymn pop into our minds and these are reassurances to us, from God's Word!