

"Remember to Sing-" by Lorelei Pepe

Psalm 147:1,7 "Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God, for it is pleasant and fitting to praise him." "Sing to the Lord with grateful praise, make music to our God.."

I like many of the Psalms, which means "praise" because some are so simple and clear that God likes to hear us sing to him. Whether we sing in church or alone, these are ways of worshipping God and honoring him. Many of these psalms were originally accompanied by the harp or flute. David wrote many of the psalms and no matter what his circumstances were, he focused on God.

I read that singing helps depression and your mental state. My mom had dementia but singing somehow opened a pathway in her mind and she would smile and be joyful. For a few moments she would come out of the "fog" and I could see tears in her eyes as they lit up for a few minutes. I was so happy I began to sing old hymns together I learned as a child with her. One of our favorites was from my grandmother who sang "I Need Thee Every Hour". Mom said she would hum and sing that while working around the house daily, and that is how she learned it. One of my mom's favorites and mine was "How Great Thou Art". We sang it at her funeral service too and it brought back sweet memories.

When I was a kid growing up in the New Utrecht Reformed Church in Brooklyn, every June there would be a parade for Flag Day. I remember marching in the streets with all my other Sunday School friends and we would sing loudly the song "Onward Christian Soldiers". We felt like soldiers marching forward and singing for Christ. It was something that we were all proud of and it became a yearly thing.

My mom and I both sang in our church choir, and I looked forward to our Sunday services. Even though she had a better voice than me, it did not matter. Our choir director encouraged all of us to sing to God with a joyful heart and that we did! It is funny how I remember songs of the hymns, more than the "pop" songs of today, and sometimes during the day or my own worship they come to my mind and I sing a few verses.

We had a small piano also growing up and even though I took lessons for a few years, it was not my calling to be a great "pianist". I think I would have preferred dancing lessons, but having 4 kids, my mom said it was not in the "budget". Anyway, mom would just sit there and "tinker" and play by ear, and I could see how it would relax her and help her with the stress of the day. On Saturday morning, we had a daily ritual of cleaning the house and singing, before we would go shopping for the day, one of our favorite things to do together. Mom always had our little stereo playing and she would hum a tune. One of her favorites was "Que Sera, Que Sera"... what will be, will be.. And I picked up a few lines too remembering "the future is not ours to see"...and I think that was her motto. Her faith was strong and she taught us that too, that God comes first in our lives.

It was difficult during the pandemic as we could no longer worship in church. I missed the fellowship and singing. It was then I went on the internet and looked for services where churches had included singing in their services and I know it so helped me with the isolation.

We also had a great guy who had a Piano Bar sing-along on Facebook. Bob Egan would perform 2 nights a week and play the piano, while others made tapes and sent them in. Somehow with technology and lots of patience, it all worked out. It was a great source of entertainment too and I made many new acquaintances on Facebook too. We felt like a family, and it got me through some rough weeks.

So, whether you sing a hymn or "pop" song it is good for the soul. Sometimes I forget our God is a joyful God. Life is so tough and as we age, it seems to get harder. I have to remember that my God wants me to rejoice in him and with him. As it says in the book of Zephaniah 3:17, "he rejoices over us with singing".

So open up your mouth and sing today!