

"Praise the Lord with . . . an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise." Psalm 33:2-3

Welcome:

THE CHORD APPROACH TO HYMN-FOCUSED PLAYING (CAHP, pronounced "cap") LESSONS FOR THE OLDER BEGINNER

Do you want to learn to play hymns? If you can already play some hymns, would you like to learn to play hymns in your own style by improvising and adding in chords? Do you have some musical background (playing another instrument, piano lessons from years ago, or currently taking piano lessons)? Then, read on!

You are about to embark on a journey that will lead through both joy and frustration. There is always a thrill in praising the Lord in song, but that thrill intensifies when one can be a part of making the music. Unfortunately, a beginner can not expect to recreate melodious, harmonizing hymns in the first few weeks. Do NOT let this be frustrating or discouraging. I have tried to place some easy hymns toward the beginning for encouragement.

A major component to eliminating frustration is the very activity that causes it -- practice! Naturally, if you do not practice, you will not be able to learn the songs in your lesson and you will get frustrated. Sometimes, during practice time, a difficult song can cause frustration. Let me assure you that if you persevere, you will be rewarded. If you are often frustrated with your lesson, re-analyze your assignments to see if maybe you are pushing ahead too fast. Ask your teacher for some extra exercises on your current level before moving ahead. If note reading is making songs difficult, review your flashcards.

I'm often asked, "How much do I need to practice?" You tell me. Rather, the way your lesson is performed will tell me! Each pianist is unique, so I do not stick to a specific practicing rule. Naturally, the more you practice, the more quickly you will learn. You are free to set your own pace, provided, of course, that you are always progressing. Ideally, one should practice for at least 45 minutes, six days a week. Realistically, practice time is often curved off to about a half of an hour, five times a week.

Generally, follow the standard: Moderation in all things. Neglecting the piano for over a week can spell disaster, but forcing practice time until all the joy is removed can also be discouraging. Keep a record of your practice time, both for self-discipline/accountability reasons and so that you and your teacher can check your progress (if a student is practicing an hour a day and still does not know his lesson, we need to slow down and vice versa). Practice time can be recorded in a pocket calendar kept with your piano books or in the notebook where you will list what will be practiced for the week. Also, make a habit of sitting down to run through a song or two while waiting for a family member to get ready to leave to go somewhere, or while waiting on supper, or just to