

UNITED WISDOM

Singing together and the experience of belonging

Meaning and Direction

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

P-26-N02 · EN

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

Singing together and the experience of belonging

Epigraph

Sing ye to the Lord

Exodus 15:21, short exact fragment of Miriam's response, King James Version. Religious deliverance is not a contemporary gathering; an opponent's death becomes no celebration rule.

What this article is about

Singing together may belong to prayer, friendship, a family evening, or musical study. People follow one form, hear other voices, and participate differently. Such events are sometimes called experiences of belonging, but a common sound says little by itself about closeness or identical meaning. This article compares a Confucian scene of repeated song, singing in Ephesians, and Miriam's response after the sea crossing. Their cultural and religious purposes remain distinct; historical scenes supply no instruction for every contemporary group. Original examples consider invitations, listening, different voices, words, and boundaries. Singing offers no guaranteed trust, relief of loneliness, or repaired relations here. Belonging may involve voluntary participation or remain a question. Someone can be present without performing, choose a smaller role, or finish a meeting without proving loyalty through their voice.

I. A common voice does not mean identical participation

Friends gather and propose a familiar song. One knows every word, another only the chorus, and a third prefers listening. If belonging requires identical performance, the third immediately appears suspect: why are they not joining everyone? Yet presence takes different forms. Someone can listen attentively, support an agreed arrangement, or simply not want to sing now. Participation should concern the actual agreement rather than a voice's volume. An evening can remain shared without everyone doing every part alike. An informal circle nevertheless differs from an ensemble with specific musical tasks. Their respective conditions should be named, rather than one model of inclusion imposed on every gathering regardless of purpose.

Different participation may belong to an ensemble's form too. People enter at different moments, perform separate parts, or wait while another group sounds. A voice's pause need

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

not mean departure. Someone learning to hear an entry sings only a brief part for now. If agreed, this limited contribution is no concealed refusal of the group. Agreement must not be assumed, however: an organiser may expect different preparation. Conditions need discussion rather than every performance request being called pressure or every mismatch a personal inability to belong. Musical forms can have requirements while a person retains freedom to decide whether this particular undertaking suits their present possibilities.

Belonging here is a possible meaning of participation, not a measured musical effect. Someone can say that sounding beside others mattered without proving it created a durable bond. Another may feel no such connection while valuing the activity. No common verdict on singing's benefit is required. The event need not receive a result participants never named, or confirmation be demanded from everyone. An account of one evening remains smaller than a general relationship theory. A song's place in the group's life can be noticed while uncertainty remains about how people will relate afterwards and whether the form will ever be repeated.

Possibilities differ before the first sound. Evening attendance suits one person; another depends on transport or care commitments. Some know a childhood song while a newcomer sees its words for the first time. A circle sends the text beforehand and names the meeting's duration. This removes no universal barrier but makes the invitation concrete. Where conditions remain inaccessible, absence should not be explained as insufficient desire to belong. A real alternative may be offered, or the existing limit acknowledged. Openness cannot replace the actual place, time, and information available. Even a well-intentioned circle cannot assume these are identical because everyone received the same invitation.

II. Confucius: hearing, repetition, then joining

Analects VII.31 in James Legge's numbered edition describes a scene: when someone in his company sang well, Confucius asked for repetition and then accompanied the song with his own voice. The brief account retains a judgment of good performance and its cultural setting. It establishes no modern equal-status choir or identical experience of closeness. The original comparison concerns a sequence: joining includes hearing another, while repetition allows the form to be heard again. This limited reading makes no ancient teacher a contemporary voluntary-circle organiser and adopts none of his judgments as an automatic criterion for today's music or today's listeners.

A newcomer does not know the song opening a meeting. They can be invited to listen first, shown the words, or told about a repeated part. That differs from demanding instant confident sound. It offers an intelligible entrance without promising to remove all awkwardness. The person may decline for now or prefer separate acquaintance with the work. Where listeners are genuinely welcome, behaviour can confirm it: no unexpected solo, no interpretation of a silent voice as insufficient courage, and no participation represented as already accepted. An

invitation remains meaningful because an answer is possible, including an answer different from the one the group hoped to hear.

Hearing another does not require copying their entire manner. An informal participant may prefer a quieter voice or different extent of involvement. In musical study, a form requires coordination and comments can belong to ordinary work. Their subject matters: an entry, words, sound, or the participant's personal worth. A fragment can be repeated without a verdict on talent. A format may also prove unsuitable. In either case, belonging in relationships need not create a duty to occupy a particular musical role that was never chosen or agreed. The ability to appreciate another's performance does not automatically give that performer authority to define every other voice's involvement.

III. Singing in a religious circle retains its subject

Ephesians 5:15–21 relates psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord, thanksgiving, and mutual relationship in fear of God. This Christian frame does not describe every pleasant musical evening. The article turns no call to mutual submission into a duty to endure pressure or abandon one's answer. A common song may have a subject important in itself rather than serving only to strengthen a group. Religious words remain words of a particular faith. Their performance establishes no identical conviction among everyone physically present and gives no grounds for assigning belief to a listener without their own response about what the gathering means to them.

Someone is invited to an evening involving spiritual music. Naming its character helps: listening, prayer, rehearsal, or an open performance. 'Singing together' can conceal different expectations. A participant who does not share its religion can ask whether listening is possible and decide whether to attend. An organiser may state the circle's purpose without promising compatibility with every form of involvement. Clear conditions allow choosing the meeting without treating difference as a moral deficiency or musical attendance as assent to a confession of faith. The decision concerns a particular setting, not an obligation either to erase its religious meaning or to adopt it merely to be present.

Secular circles can also give words shared significance: family history, a place's memory, or a friendship's tradition. A newcomer may not know it and hear melody where others recall an event. Brief context can be offered where appropriate without demanding the same experience. Invitation allows learning rather than requiring immediate feeling. Distinguishing religious and everyday settings avoids using sacred text simply as a convenient entertainment shell, or making every amateur evening equivalent to worship because people sing beside each other. Shared musical activity can have different subjects, and attention to those differences can make a newcomer understand what is being offered without dictating their response.

IV. A common song can answer a particular event

Exodus 15:19–21 describes the sea crossing's completion, Miriam with a timbrel, women with timbrels and dances, and her response directed to the Lord. Pharaoh's forces dying are part of the context. This is a religious deliverance account rather than neutral contemporary team cohesion. Celebration of death is no reader's rule here, and historical roles are not proposed for reproduction. The limited comparison concerns common voice answering an event with particular significance. Its subject cannot simply become abstract pleasure in togetherness, even where a musical form seems familiar. The article's voluntary everyday examples do not claim equivalent circumstances or an equivalent religious meaning.

A small group finishes preparing an amateur play and sings something heard during rehearsals. People connect it with completed work, without equating their event with biblical deliverance. What is being marked can be asked: shared effort, a difficult stage ending, or another opportunity to meet. Answers may vary. Someone helping with scenery need not know every word for their contribution to be recognised. A song can give celebration a common form without replacing thanks to particular people or making invisible preparation less important than voices on stage. Musical participation and participation in the undertaking are related without being identical, and recognising one need not obscure the other.

Complicated consequences remain despite a shared song. A performance went well, but someone carried an unagreed workload. Their concern needs separate hearing. Repeating the song and remembering good things is not an adequate answer by itself. Beauty does not prove preparation fair. Performance can be valued while labour's distribution is discussed. Celebration retains its subject and arrangements theirs. Musical form may accompany acknowledgment of a result without becoming a way to close difficult conversation or require everyone to describe the event as equally joyful. Someone's question about the work need not mean they deny that other people had a meaningful shared moment.

V. Belonging allows difference and refusal

An invitation differs from a loyalty test. A family usually sings at the table; a new guest listens. Someone suggests that without joining they remain an outsider. An ordinary form has become a condition of recognition. Its boundary can be restored: song belongs to the evening, but the guest need not prove a right to be there through voice. This original proposal concerns a voluntary gathering, not cancelling every ensemble's conditions. Relationships differ from particular roles. Refusal may concern this song, moment, or format rather than everyone at the table or the possibility of future contact. A narrow answer should not automatically receive a much broader meaning.

Words, key, publicity, or singing itself may not suit someone. A brief refusal need not explain everything. If desired, one subject can be named: listening today, not performing this song, or singing in a smaller circle without guests. Such answers clarify an arrangement without making a personal voice a shared resource. Refusal cannot be promised to disappoint nobody; expectations vary. Voluntary choice remains possible beside disappointment where it is not used to demand a different answer as belonging's price. The group can hear a boundary without pretending everyone wanted the same evening, and the person can retain their answer without needing a complete account of its origin.

Consent has scope too: chorus without solo, rehearsal without public performance, attendance without recording. Expanding a role requires separate discussion. A leader asks someone to open the song alone, intending kind recognition; the unexpected role may not suit its recipient. Their refusal can be accepted without an accusation of insufficient gratitude. Belonging gives others no right to appoint any involvement they choose. Common form becomes more accurate when agreement concerns what was actually offered rather than an imagined permanent duty of availability. A participant can value a circle and still decline a particular invitation, including one the leader regards as an honour or opportunity.

VI. Performance quality and personal worth differ

Singing may involve a musical task. An amateur ensemble coordinates openings, endings, words, and parts. This need not cancel voluntary participation or make every comment humiliating. Comments should remain specific. Someone is told where to enter after a pause and invited to repeat a fragment. That differs from saying their natural inability obstructs everyone. Working on form needs no total judgment of the person. Current preparation and an appropriate role can be discussed while another format remains available where requirements and possibilities differ. A musical correction can concern this attempt without pretending to describe permanent capacity or the value of the participant in relationships outside the rehearsal.

Circles may have different purposes. One gathers for free evening singing; another prepares a work for performance. Unstated conditions can produce incompatible expectations: companionship for one person, precise rehearsal for another. Disappointment need not result from malice. Clarifying purpose comes first. A person may find it unsuitable without obliging the group to change everything, while seeking another circle is no defeat. Musical belonging requires no single route, difficulty level, or public format for everyone. A group can describe its actual undertaking and leave someone free to look elsewhere, rather than treating departure as proof that the person has rejected all possible common musical activity.

Who defines quality and how matters too. One strong voice silently chooses songs, tempo, and style. Others struggle to express preferences because that participant is considered most

experienced. Experience can help without replacing agreement about leadership. A rehearsal leader, ways of suggesting works, and moments for discussing differences can be named beforehand. An ordinary conversation may suffice in an informal circle. This article establishes no choir organisation or professional criteria. It distinguishes knowledge of form from unlimited authority over another's time, voice, and taste. Competence can have a recognised place while its scope remains answerable to the actual agreement rather than expanding through habit alone.

Preparation also belongs to a role's scope. A leader expects practice between meetings although this was never stated. Someone accepted evening singing without planning separate study. The new requirement can be named and involvement reconsidered. This is not simply a contest over who loves music more. Obligations and available time differ. A task genuinely needing preparation cannot be promised away through friendliness, but a new demand should not become an obligation supposedly already accepted. Clarity about work between meetings distinguishes an invitation, actual agreement, and a further proposal. The person can answer that proposal without having their earlier participation turned into unlimited consent.

VII. Shared sound does not automatically settle disagreement

People can sing together while disagreeing. Friends debate future meetings and end an evening with a familiar song. It may be a pleasant shared part without settling the dispute. Citing it later as proof of agreement expands its meaning. What was decided and what remains open can be named separately. A common voice cannot answer questions about schedules, responsibility, or willingness to continue instead of conversation. A meaningful connection can coexist with different decisions; it should not be represented as an agreement that never occurred. The presence of one shared form does not establish shared answers to every issue surrounding the group's future.

Singing guarantees no closeness outside the event either. Someone values rehearsal without wanting private contact with everyone. Another hopes for friendship. Expectations can be noticed without making them others' debts. One participant leaves after class while others stay to talk. Leaving need not diminish shared work. Additional obligations require discussion as separate conditions. Musical participation promises neither friendship, continuing help, nor unrestricted access to private life. The person who stays can value conversation, while the person who leaves can value the music, without either response becoming proof of the other's sincerity or a measure of whether they truly belong to the activity.

What occurred can nevertheless be named honestly: a part was learned, voices heard, a song completed, or being alongside people mattered. Experience need not be reduced because it did not repair relations. Limited meaning is no weak meaning. Two acquaintances sing one composition after a long separation and leave without large promises. The meeting remains a

meeting, clear in meaning to one and open to another. Connection's depth is not assessed here through volume, matching emotions, or a desire for immediate repetition. Each participant retains a separate answer about what happened and what they choose next, without requiring the common sound to speak for everyone.

VIII. Recording and publication need separate agreement

Shared singing can be private. Friends sing at home while one quietly films to preserve the evening. They may intend kind remembrance, but others agreed to participation in a room rather than necessarily storing image and voice. Planned recording should be named beforehand. Someone can avoid the frame or not sing with a camera running. This concerns an ordinary voluntary agreement, not legal recording rules. Its substantive boundary is simple: one kind of consent should not silently become another because an event was shared and joyful for the person filming. Their wish to preserve it does not determine how everyone else wants their involvement retained.

Publication changes listeners. A familiar domestic form becomes available to people participants did not choose. Where recording will appear, whom it includes, and alternatives to open posting can be discussed. Publication is unnecessary to recognise significance. Participants choose a list of works and a brief personal impression instead. This trace reproduces no voices but may fit their intention. Another group may want a public performance and agree beforehand. No format is belonging's compulsory measure or condition for work to count as completed. The choice concerns what participants actually want to make public, rather than an assumed need to demonstrate the event's value through its widest possible audience.

Captions need accuracy too. A singing group does not necessarily represent a whole family, tradition, or community. Someone attended as a guest, sang only part, or does not share the words. 'Everyone united' may invent meaning never agreed. A particular event and involvement can be described without general conclusions about convictions. A personal feeling of closeness should remain personal. Stored sound shows sound, not each inward answer. A public account should leave room for that distinction rather than use a recording as evidence of agreement about matters never discussed. The right to tell one's impression need not become authority to assign that impression to every audible voice.

IX. A shared form can end and retain meaning

A song ends, and a circle may end too. Schedules, roles, interests, and homes change. A group finishes its season without knowing whether it will meet again. Thanks require no eternal-continuation promise. Belonging to completed participation does not demand constant renewal. Someone can value meetings and decline another season. Today's choice concerns today's conditions rather than proving the former common voice unreal. A form's finitude can be named beforehand, allowing relationships to continue differently or remain memories. Its ending does not have to be represented as betrayal, and its earlier value does not establish every future commitment the group might wish to propose.

After singing, an impression differs from the next arrangement. Someone wanting another evening can suggest a date and hear actual answers. Excitement during performance does not already consent to new duties. An unrealised continuation does not cancel the completed song. Friends decide to meet without a fixed musical plan while one finds an ensemble with regular rehearsals. These choices need not destroy shared history. A suitable current commitment can be sought without requiring one earlier form to meet everyone's future needs simultaneously. The conversation about what happens next has its own grounds, and the memory of what happened remains available without deciding that conversation in advance.

The Confucian scene, Ephesians, and Miriam's response retain distinct subjects: attentive musical joining, Christian thanksgiving, and a religious answer to deliverance. They establish no common contemporary effect. The original examination asks about voluntary form: what is performed, how entry works, who listens, what scope is agreed, and what remains open afterwards. A feeling of belonging can be named if present without assigning it to everyone. A common song can matter as a completed limited moment. It need not prove identical faith, friendship's depth, or unconditional readiness for any future relationship commitment. Its value can coexist with difference, an ending, and separate choices about continuing.

After leaving, someone may not know how to name former belonging. They no longer sing in the ensemble but still regard its meetings as an important part of their year. Past participation can be named without retaining a current role. The choice is not between eternal membership and declaring no common undertaking ever existed. The circle has a history too and may continue without that person. A differently sounding new performance need not signify lost unity. People may change form; a former participant may retain a limited connection without authority over the group's later decisions. Earlier involvement remains history rather than a permanent right to govern continuation.

What this means in practice

Before an ordinary voluntary gathering, clarify its subject: free singing, rehearsal, prayer, or listening. Ask whether listening first is possible and what contribution is expected. Decline or choose another setting where unsuitable. This offers no professional vocal technique or promise to remove awkwardness, loneliness, or disagreement.

Name your available response: a part, no solo, listening, or finishing. Do not infer another's wishes from earlier participation or expand their role unexpectedly. Name religious or personal content where relevant while leaving room not to share it. A musical task and a person's worth remain distinct subjects.

Discuss planned recording beforehand and publication separately. Another trace can preserve the event. Describe your impression rather than making all voices prove unanimity. Particular participation terms matter more than an attractive general account a person never chose. This voluntary exercise does not establish recording law.

Afterwards, if useful, name one completed action and one open question. Being beside people may have mattered without promised continuation or a required matching feeling. Propose a later date or role separately. A song can finish while its significance remains limited, different among participants, or unclear.

Key quotation

> *while he accompanied it with his own voice.*

Analects VII.31 in James Legge's numbered edition, short exact clause. Joining after repetition establishes no identical closeness among participants.

Connections between traditions

Line	Source	Distinct subject and limit
Hearing and joining	Analects VII.31, Legge	Cultural scene judging performance; no equal-status choir model.
Singing and thanksgiving	Ephesians 5:15–21, KJV	The Lord and Christian life; no ordinary gathering or coerced submission.
Answer to an event	Exodus 15:19–21, KJV	Miriam and deliverance; an army's death no celebration norm.
Voice, listening, and role	Original family and ensemble examples	Consent has scope; performance quality differs from personal worth.
A trace and continuation	Original recording and season-ending scenes	Singing proves no common belief, publication agreement, or permanent availability.

Primary sources

1. Confucius. *Analects*, VII.31 in numbered James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, volume 1, Wikisource. The complete repetition-and-joining scene was read during the current task's Book VII return and honestly reused. Legge's 1893 identification was checked earlier. The key quotation is an exact short clause, translated into RU by UW. Performance judgment remains; no modern choir or identical closeness is inferred.
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Chinese_Classics/Volume_1/Confucian_Analects/VII

2. *Ephesians* 5:15–21. King James Version, Bible Gateway. The entire passage and version information were read. Psalms, hymns, thanks, and mutual relationship retain their Christian subject; submission becomes no duty to endure pressure.
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205%3A15-21&version=KJV

3. *Exodus* 15:19–21. King James Version, Bible Gateway. All three verses and version information were read. Miriam's response accompanies the crossing, women's dances, and the army's death; the latter supplies no contemporary rule. The epigraph is a short exact fragment of 15:21, translated into RU by UW.
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2015%3A19-21&version=KJV

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

Tags

shared singing, belonging, voice, listening, participation, consent, refusal, invitation, boundaries, group, ensemble, family, prayer, thanksgiving, song, words, performance, Confucius, Miriam, Ephesians, Exodus, Confucianism, Christian tradition, biblical tradition, recording, publication, continuation, preparation, difference, ordinary life

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.