

# Music's Impact on Health

Listening to religious music helps seniors increase their life satisfaction and self-esteem, and decreases anxiety around death.

That is the finding of researchers at Baylor University, University of Texas-San Antonio, Bowling Green State University and Duke University, and reported by *McKnight's Long-Term Care News* recently.

The music also helped with a sense of control, they said. This suggests that some long-term care residents may benefit from listening to religious music. Responses were collected among more than 1,000 adults, all over age 65, who were either practicing Christians, identified as a Christian in their past, or who were unaffiliated with a specific faith.

“Given that religious music is available to most individuals – even those with health problems or physical limitations that might preclude participation in more formal aspects of religious life – it might be a valuable resource for promoting mental health later in the life course,” the authors concluded. Results appeared in *The Journal of Gerontology* on April 15.

A 2013 study, also published in *The Journal of Gerontology*, looked specifically at the use of religious songs in helping older African Americans cope with stressful life events. It found that songs evoking themes around thanksgiving, communication with God and life after death improved the mental health of those studied.

A *Reader's Digest* article (September 1992) entitled “Music's Surprising Power to Heal” mentions music therapy for pain, anxiety, depression, emotional and physical handicaps and neurological disorders.

This research validates what the Bible has to say about music and its positive effects. As examples:

1. *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night, on an instrument of 10 strings, on the lute, and on the harp, with harmonious sound. For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands (Psalm 92:1-4 NKJV).*
2. *Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19 NKJV).*

The Bible is filled with many other references to the positive impact of religious music and its health-giving implications. Let us find opportunities to heed its advice.

– Beecher Hunter