

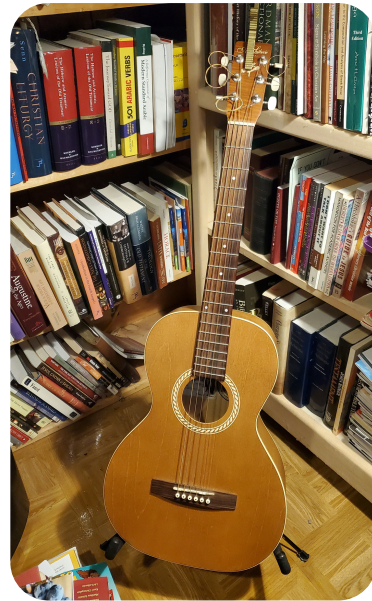


LENT DEVOTIONS

# Connecting to God: Strumming Distractions

Pastor Dave Delaney

Sitting in a corner of my home library near my desk, surrounded by theological and technical reference books for biblical studies, is a gift that came a number of years ago from Nancy Delaney on my birthday – a parlor guitar from the Canadian instrument makers Art & Lutherie. I had been admiring it in a second-hand shop once and she went back later to get it for me. I keep it nearby rather than with the several other guitars I have partly because the “parlor” size means it doesn’t take up a lot of space, but also because it provides a very convenient and welcome distraction when I most need it.



From the beginning, music has been a human vehicle for expression in times of stress as well as celebration, including both thanksgiving and supplication to God. I have never understood why some Christian traditions restrict instruments from worship, because they can do and say things that the human voice cannot, and they become creation’s partners – fashioned in this case from a symphony of trees: Wild Cherry, Maple, Spruce, and Rosewood – to our many moments when we need to say something to God that may or may not be possible with spoken language. The self-care discipline of being distractible – the antidote to my normal mode of being hyper-focused – is what allows me to respond within seconds to something that comes my way, whether an inspiration, a frustration, a dead end, a question, or a crisis. Grabbing this friendly companion and picking or strumming – sometimes for no more than a few seconds – a set of notes that may date back decades or centuries or appear brand new out of thin air, interrupts the torrent of information demanding my attention, and slows the tempo of my thoughts, allowing God to finally get a word in edgewise.

For some, Lent includes the very worthy practice of “giving something up,” and allowing silence to do its work, but I find that during this season of repentance and contemplation, I’m more likely to pick something up and let music fill the air.