

SELF INVENTORY QUESTIONS FOR PIANISTS

- ✓ How important is it to you to play the piano for the Lord? What priority does it have in your life?
- ✓ Can you commit to 30 minutes a day of practice for self improvement? 20? 10? 5? Assuming you've had some private lessons, get out your old books. Bring back a classic song or two you used to know well. Work away at it.
- ✓ How well do you know your scales? How many octaves can you play? Hands alone? Together? Start working on *Dozen a Day* exercise books or *Hanon* exercise books.
- ✓ How well do you know the I-IV-V-V7 chord changes with both hands in main keys? Can you explain why they are called I-IV-V-V7 chords?
- ✓ How well do you know the minor keys? What is a relative minor?
- ✓ Do you know your minor scales? Relative minor, natural, and harmonic minor?
- ✓ What are we talking about when we say walk-ups and walk-downs?
- ✓ What are octave fill notes?
- ✓ What does improvising mean? How much should you do or not do?
- ✓ Know some basic accompaniment rhythm styles that work for you instantly (for example, traditional, swing, Southern gospel).
- ✓ Do you know your key signatures? How fast can you name them? Do you know the circle of 5ths?
- ✓ Do you know the shortcut—going up or down a fifth while looking at the keyboard to recognize key signatures?
- ✓ Why is knowing the key signatures important?
- ✓ How fast can you name the notes in the basic chords? C Major (C-E-G) G Major (G-B-D), etc.
- ✓ What does it mean to modulate?
- ✓ What is the simplest way to modulate? How creative should you be, and how do you get better at it?
- ✓ Does playing without music seem impossible to you?
- ✓ How about transposing? Impossible?
- ✓ If you are not good at sight reading music, is there hope? How can you improve?
- ✓ What do you do when the singer says, "I only have one book with me, but it's okay. I'll throw away the copy I made after church."
- ✓ As a church pianist, how can you help musicians think and plan ahead?
- ✓ If you are an older church pianist, how can you help "share the bench" so junior pianists can transition into playing the piano during church? (Some suggestions: Sunday school, youth meetings, regular meetings, prayer meetings, retirement/nursing home settings, fellowship nights, nursery during church services, have junior pianist play keyboard or another piano along with seasoned veteran).