

# Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)

Words from the book of Ecclesiastes, adaptation and music by Pete Seeger



In 1959, folk singer Pete Seeger received a letter from his publisher asking for a new tune, but to steer clear of the protest songs he'd been writing. Seeger wasn't keen about the letter, but he did find a poem in the Bible (found in 3 Ecclesiastes) that he reworked into a song, adding the phrase "Turn, turn, turn" between lines in the chorus, reinforcing the repetition of opposites throughout the verses.

Seeger first released "Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)" on his live 1962 recording, *The Bitter and the Sweet*, but it was the Byrds' 1965 cover that made the song popular.

Seeger played the song on a 12-string guitar in dropped-D tuning, with the

strings tuned down two whole steps (to B<sup>b</sup> F B<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G C). The version below follows Seeger's original treatment, but uses standard dropped-D tuning. If you're strumming with a pick, try the alternate-bass strum pattern below, which is similar to the way Seeger picks and grabs chords with his thumbpick and fingers at the beginning of the song. You can also play the strumming pattern with your fingers, or you can use the fingerpicking pattern shown below, which is similar to how Seeger plays the second half of the song.

I've included the intro heard on the Byrds' version of the song. Roger McGuinn played this on a 12-string Rickenbacker electric guitar, but it also sounds great on an acoustic (with six or 12 strings, although a 12-string's high-octave D string will help smooth out the melody line). —ANDREW DUBROCK

## Chords Dropped-D Tuning (D A D G B E)



### Chorus

D G G/F# Em7  
To everything, turn, turn, turn

D G G/F# Em7  
There is a season, turn, turn, turn

A7 D  
And a time for every purpose under heaven

1. A7 D  
A time to be born, a time to die

A7 D  
A time to plant, a time to reap

A7 D  
A time to kill, a time to heal

G A7 D  
A time to laugh, a time to weep

### Repeat Chorus

2. A7 D  
A time to build up, a time to break down

A7 D  
A time to dance, a time to mourn

A7 D  
A time to cast away stones

G A7 D  
A time to gather stones together

## Strum Pattern



\* ▣ = down; ▴ = up

### Repeat Chorus

3. A7 D  
A time of love, a time of hate

A7 D  
A time of war, a time of peace

A7 D  
A time you may embrace

G A7 D  
A time to refrain from embracing

### Repeat Chorus

4. A7 D  
A time to gain, a time to lose

A7 D  
A time to rend, a time to sew

A7 D  
A time of love, a time of hate

G A7 D  
A time of peace, I swear it's not too late

### Repeat Chorus (two times)