

The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30

Considering Our Visitors

by Bob Dickey

Have you ever wondered what someone who visits our assembly periods may see and think? If you have never thought about it before, perhaps you should.

Try to imagine that you have just arrived at the Sunday morning service for the first time as a visitor. Your first impressions might be based on the appearance of the building, parking lot, and the immediate physical environment. Then, as you enter the meetinghouse, you come into contact with what is really the church – the people of the Lord.

While there are many preconceived attitudes and/or prejudices that you may hold, what you see and hear as you enter will leave a lasting impression. You may feel comfortable or uncomfortable, depending a great deal on how you were greeted. Will you be warmly welcomed? Is there a chance that you will just be ignored by many of the people who are already present? Soon, you will feel like you are wanted, appreciated, and cared for; or just maybe, “Good morning!” will be the first and last words you will personally be told.

You will have definite impressions of the worship service. You will find that there is a sense of spiritual excitement, and will notice a dynamic and stirring response among the people. Or, you may find the service is contrived – little more than a necessary exercise and a series of rituals.

One thing that will be of great interest to you will be the sermon, for what is said and taught during this period will likely cause some reaction within. Will the preacher’s style and delivery be distracting, or will you be able to concentrate on the message of divine truth? You will also notice the reaction of other people present around you. Will they be listening carefully? Will they be showing divine interest? How will they act at the close of the lesson when the invitation of Jesus is extended?

Consider the following anonymous letter, and ask yourself, “Could this happen here? . . .

Dear Christian,

I attended your services recently. You would not remember me. I may be 11 or 80 years old. I was there hunting for something and I think I would have found it if you hadn't been in such a hurry.

You sang songs about a loving Lord that made my heart beat faster. I felt a tight choking sensation in my throat as your preacher described the condition of a lost person.

"I am lost! He is talking about me! From the way he speaks, being saved must be very important", I said to myself. I looked about at you in the pews near me. You were listening. You seemed to think that the preacher's words were important. "All these people," I thought, "are so concerned and they want me to be saved, too."

At last the preacher finished his sermon, as if looking at me, he started telling me how I could become a child of God. I had heard the beautiful songs you sang. I swallowed a lump in my throat and his words of exhortation were drowned out in a buzzing beside me and I could not hear him speaking.

When I glanced around to see what the commotion was about, you were putting your little girl's coat on her, telling her to get things together so you could leave.

Looking in front of me, I saw several people checking their watches like they could not believe the correct time. Suddenly, I didn't want to look at any more of you. My eyes burned and my throat hurt. My feet were so tired I couldn't walk toward the pleading preacher.

You didn't really care. The salvation your preacher had been telling me about was not important. You didn't care that I was lost. You only wanted to get away so you could do the things you pleased.

I wanted to get away, too. I wanted to run. But I waited until the service was over and walked out among you...alone...and lost.

When the services are over, what will happen to our visitors? Will they desire to return? Will they feel a reason or need to come back? Will they be able to identify with what a Christian is and does by what they have seen during the service? Will they desire to be a part of the congregation or would considerable effort be necessary to bring them to that conclusion?

Few of us realize just how great an impression we make on those around us every day. Hopefully, we will come to better recognize how important our behavior is to those who visit our services. Let me make a few brief suggestions about how we can all do better.

1. Make a point to greet every visitor warmly.
2. Introduce yourself and others nearby.
3. Show them you are genuinely concerned.
4. Ask if there is any way that we can be of help.
5. Set a proper example during the assembly.
6. Invite them to return to meet with us again.

News and Notes:

Tuesday Bible Studies – 11 a.m. Old Testament and 7 p.m. Romans

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16