

Back To Basics

Volume 6

DECEMBER 2008

Number 12

A Monthly Journal Dedicated To Teaching First Principles

SPECIAL ISSUE:

FOR THE MEN OF THE CHURCH

Johnie Edwards

Men in the church of Christ have work to do! This is not to say that the women in the church have no responsibilities; they do. But their work is limited. "But I suffer not a man to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:12).

BEGINNING OF WORK. Work began with God. Genesis 1-2 contains a divine record of God's creation. It is then stated, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made..." (Gen. 2:2-3). God now gives man his first work. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden, to dress and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). We need to be impressed with the fact that God, from the beginning, expected man to be a working man!

JESUS WORKED. The Son of God was a worker. "...My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (Jn. 5:17). Jesus was set on doing His Father's will. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (Jn. 4:34). "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day..." (Jn. 9:4). That, He did! "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (Jn. 17:4). Jesus worked and left plenty of work for us!

A MIND TO WORK. God has always required that man have a "willing heart" when it comes to doing the Lord's work (Ex. 35:5). And He still does. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). One reason the Jerusalem wall was built in a short time; "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6). There is a great need for more men to be willing to be involved in the public service of the Lord!

PUBLIC SPIRITUAL WORK. The men of the church need to be aware of some basic principles when they are involved in the public service of the church. We must first realize that we are doing the work of the Lord. And that makes it serious business! As you continue to read this special issue of *Back to Basics*, please remember to dress properly for the occasion, as you give God your best; singing sets the tone for the entire service; public prayer-leading is not a personal prayer; prayer at the Lord's table is a prayer of thanks; get the facts for announcements; read with meaning; talk Scripture; preach the word; elders to oversee and deacons to serve. What a work!

DRESSING FOR SERVICE

Craig Thomas

Sadly, what constitutes proper dress for those participating in public worship services has become controversial. Over the past several years, “casualness” has crept into our society such that it has been elevated by many to a badge of “honor.” Let’s consider a couple of simple points when dressing for service.

OUR ATTIRE SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO THE OCCASION. Surely anyone with an ounce of common sense understands the principle that certain occasions demand different, yet appropriate, attire. I dress much differently going to Wal-Mart to buy lawn fertilizer than when I go to a funeral home to pay respect for a dear friend. What type of clothing would you advise your son or daughter to wear to a job interview? What would you wear if invited to the White House? Doesn’t God deserve even more respect than such activities as job interviews, funeral home visits, or even a visit to the White House?

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE IS A SCRIPTURAL CONCEPT. Please read Matthew 22:1-14. Why did the man “cast...into outer darkness” stand out like a “sore thumb”? Because he was dressed inappropriately for the occasion (v. 11). We all understand, in the absolute sense, our outward appearance is

not necessarily an accurate indicator of the state of our heart (Mt. 15:20). But, at the same time, our outward appearance can betray our inner self. What if your daughter’s first date showed up wearing a motorcycle jacket and Nazi helmet? Doesn’t such attire say something about the young man’s “inner self,” about his character?

So, should we have a dress code and require every man leading in prayer or serving at the Lord’s table wear a suit and tie? No! The answer is simple: Every culture has clothing that is deemed appropriate for different occasions, clothing that makes a statement relative to the occasion. Matthew 22:12 tells us that to dress inappropriately for an occasion is considered an insult. Thus, when dressing for service just ask yourself: “Is what I’m wearing appropriate for serving the ‘Lord God Almighty’ who is ‘Holy, holy, holy’ (Rev. 4:8), or is my manner of dress an insult?”

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“GOD IS GREATLY TO BE FEARED IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS, AND TO BE HAD IN REVERENCE OF ALL THEM THAT ARE ABOUT HIM” (Ps. 89:7).

Back To Basics

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1-800-889-0338
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Back To Basics, published by Edwards Publishers, is a 16-page monthly journal dedicated to teaching first principles. www.bcktobscs.com

Subscription Information:

One Year: \$15.00
Single Issue: \$1.25

Available in bundles of 10 or more

MEN NEEDED IN THE CHURCH

John Isaac Edwards

The Lord's church is in need of some "good men" (Prov. 2:20). This study takes a look at some men needed in the church today.

MEN WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD.

We need men in the church like Noah of whom God said, "...thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Gen. 7:1). Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5). A righteous man does righteousness (1 Jn. 3:7). Eternal life is in store for the righteous (Mt. 25:46).

MEN WHO COMMAND THEIR HOUSEHOLD.

Men like Abraham are needed in the church. God said concerning Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment..." (Gen. 18:19). Paul commanded Ephesian fathers, "...provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). If we had men like Abraham, we would have men qualified to be elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12).

MEN WHO ARE UNCOMPROMISING. There is a great need for men like Moses in the church as too many seem to just go with the flow. When Pharaoh told Moses, "Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed" (Ex. 10:24), Moses said, "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind..." (Ex. 10:26). We cannot afford to compromise with error! (Gal. 2:4-5).

MEN WHO CHOOSE TO SERVE THE LORD. Men with the spirit of Joshua are needed. Remember this classic statement: "...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). He made up his mind

and was unashamed to stand up. We need men in the church today like Joshua.

MEN WHO ARE MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES.

The church is in need of men like Apollos who was "mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24, 28). Too many men do not know the Scriptures as they should! The only way one will become spiritually strong is by searching the Scriptures (Jn. 5:39; Acts 17:11).

The church needs men to step up and be men!

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OUR SERVICE UNTO THE LORD

David McPherson

In Deuteronomy 10:12, it is written: “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” What a privilege to serve the Lord! As we fulfill such an important responsibility, it is critical to remember certain things. Our service unto the Lord must be acceptable, willing, with diligence, and with heart and soul.

WE MUST SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY. “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28). Just any ole way I choose to serve God will not cut it. God must be served with reverence and godly fear. Honor, adoration, great esteem must accompany our efforts on the Lord’s behalf. Anything less is simply unacceptable. Men, there needs to be an evident seriousness toward our various labors in the kingdom. Those who lack such need to repent.

WE MUST SERVE GOD WILLINGLY. If you are a soldier in the Lord’s army it is not because you received a draft notice. No, servants of the Lord become such through voluntary enlistment. Long ago, David encouraged, “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever” (1 Chr. 28:9). Is yours a “willing mind”? Service that does the greatest good is from the inside out. Willing workers is what God wants.

WE MUST SERVE GOD WITH DILIGENCE.

How were the early saints to serve? “He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8). Diligent service shows the utmost care and attention to detail. Diligence in our service unto the Lord consists of men well prepared to lead in worship. Their thoughts, appearance, demeanor, words, etc. are all fit for the occasion. Dear brother, do not be lukewarm, negligent, indifferent in your service. Know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58) and demands the highest regard you can give it.

WE MUST SERVE GOD WITH HEART AND SOUL. “But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Josh. 22:5). Just as Joshua warned Israel of old, so it is for us. Whole-hearted service is what the Lord requires. Sincere service which comes from the heart is contagious. The more serious and devoted we become toward God and the things of God, the more others will do likewise. God forbid we simply go through the motions, or serve in some hypocritical capacity. Dear brother, incline your heart to the Lord!

How is your service unto the Lord? May God help us all to humbly submit to His will in this and all things. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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LEADING SINGING

Michael Sater

Everyone is commanded to sing. Because we are instructed to do things “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40), there is the necessity for a song leader.

TALENTS NEEDED. Not everyone can be a song leader. There is of necessity certain talents that must be present in order to carry out this role. First, of course, is the ability to sing. While it’s true there are occasions and situations where this might not be possible, it is the best-case scenario. While not as important, it would also be of great help if one could keep an accurate beat to the music. This keeps the singing together. The ability to keep a beat must also be accompanied by keeping the beat at an appropriate tempo. Leading a song too fast or too slow can be detrimental to the task at hand. *Jesus, Rose of Sharon* is more of a ballad and should be lead at a slower pace than *Onward Christian Soldiers*. The words and the written music usually lend themselves to the appropriate tempo. Then, there is the topic of pitching the song properly. This, too, can be very detrimental to proper worship if not done correctly. Some songs have a bass lead in the chorus. Therefore, pitching the song too low will disrupt the singing of the song when the chorus is ready to be sung. By the same token, pitching the song too high can really affect the tenors (and in some cases, the sopranos). This is where the pitch pipe is an extremely invaluable tool. It is used to correctly pitch the song. The song leader must have the ability to sing in order to make proper use of the pitch pipe.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SONG LEADERS.

1) *Be ready to sing once the invitation is given.* Too many song leaders leave a gap between the phrase “...come as we stand and sing” and the first note of the invitation song.

2) *If you’re going to use your hand to direct, be sure you are using it properly.* Make sure you’re not just getting upper body exercise. Know what you’re doing. If you can properly use your hand to direct the singing, make your hand motions big enough for everyone to see, but not so big that it becomes a distraction to look at you. Lead from the elbow and not from the shoulder.

3) *Sing loud enough to “lead” the congregation.* However, do not shout out your words. Barking out your words and notes is a big distraction to those trying to concentrate on proper worship.

4) *Select songs that are appropriate to the occasion.* Don’t lead a closing song at the invitation. It would help if you knew ahead of time what the sermon topic was in order to pick out appropriate songs. This is not always possible, so use common sense.

5) *Dress for the occasion.* You’ve been entrusted with the role of leading God’s family in song. Look the part. How you dress shows how important you take your responsibility.

6) *Maintain good eye contact with the congregation.* Remember, you’re the song leader, not the song starter. Eye contact will give you the presence of a leader.

Our talents are given to us for a reason. Don’t waste them. If you feel you have the raw talent to lead singing, develop it. Work with someone in the congregation and the reward of leading God’s people in praising God will be just a glimpse of the beautiful singing we’ll be a part of when we get to heaven.

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LEADING PRAYER

Larry R. Ping II

Prayer is a privilege of the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12). Believers are afforded this avenue in which they communicate with the Lord God Almighty! When a man is asked to lead a congregation in prayer, he must keep the following practical things in mind.

DO YOUR BEST. If a man decides to do something, he may as well do his best. God has never accepted half-hearted service. Whatever God has commanded should be done “diligently” (Ezra 7:23). Make up your mind now to do your best in leading the congregation in prayer.

STAND UP AND SPEAK UP. When you are asked to lead a prayer, you must be heard! At the least, you need to stand up so that your voice is at its strongest. If a microphone is available, use it! When Ezra rose to read God’s law, he spoke and read in such a way that the people understood (Neh. 8:1-8). We must also pray in such a way that the people can hear and understand.

KNOW THE OCCASION. There are different prayers offered at different times throughout the service. An opening prayer is meant to commence the service. The closing prayer is intended to tie the service together and conclude it. The prayers during the Lord’s supper are more specific. Perhaps you will be asked to lead a prayer after a confession, which also is specific. Remember at which point in the service you are praying.

PREPARE. If you know you are scheduled to lead the Lord’s people in prayer, prepare for it. Be sure to have your thoughts gathered and organized. The people will appreciate a well thought out prayer as much as they value a well thought out sermon. Even if you were asked at the last moment, prior thought is important.

PRAY FROM YOUR HEART. When Jesus instructed the people about prayer, He warned about using “vain repetitions” (Mt. 6:7). Obviously, you will use similar phrases from prayer to prayer. Never, though, allow yourself to rise and pray a mechanical, memorized prayer. Jesus also condemned praying to “be seen of men” (Mt. 6:5). If your purpose for leading public prayer is to receive public praise, then simply refrain from praying. I would much rather hear a man stumble through a heartfelt prayer than a man offering an emotionless, vain plea to God. If you need a piece of paper to help you remember as you first begin leading public prayer, so be it. This is a sign your heart is in the right place.

LENGTH IS NOT AN IMPORTANT ISSUE. Some seem to equate the length of a prayer with the quality of a prayer. While some prayers are longer than others, both are acceptable as long as they are from the heart.

BE THOUGHTFUL OF YOUR DRESS. When you are scheduled to be in front of the congregation in any capacity, what you wear and how you wear it says something about yourself and your attitude (Prov. 23:7). This author is not saying a suit and tie is necessary. Be sure, though, your dress is well ordered and not unkempt. Tuck in your shirt and look presentable. Remember, you are leading the people in praying to God!

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“BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING; BUT IN EVERY THING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD” (PHIL. 4:6).

SERVING AT THE LORD'S TABLE

David Eldridge

Before His death, Christ established a memorial that is to be remembered “till He comes” (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Thus, the church comes together every first day of the week to partake of this memorial (Acts 20:7). There are some things which those who wait upon the Lord’s table should remember in order to do the best job possible in leading this part of worship service.

PROPER TERMS FOR THE LORD’S SUPPER.

The memorial that Christ instituted is referred to by the following terms: *Breaking of bread* (Acts 2:42; 20:7); *Communion* (1 Cor. 10:16); *Lord’s table* (1 Cor. 10:21); and the *Lord’s supper* (1 Cor. 11:20). Those who serve at the Lord’s table should know and use these Scriptural terms for this memorial.

ELEMENTS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER.

The Lord’s supper consists of two basic elements. One element of the Lord’s supper is the bread (Mt. 26:26). This bread is unleavened as that is what our Lord used when He instituted this memorial (Mk. 14:1). The other element of the Lord’s supper is the cup, the fruit of the vine (Mt. 26:27-29; Lk. 22:17-18).

WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER IS. All Christians should know the purpose and meaning of the Lord’s supper as revealed in Scripture. It is a memorial of the Lord’s death (Lk. 22:19-20). It is a proclamation of His death (1 Cor. 11:26). It is a communion, a sharing with one another and the Lord (Mt. 26:18; 1 Cor. 11:25). It is a reminder that we are under the new covenant (Mt. 26:28). It reminds us that one day the Lord will return (1 Cor. 11:26). When serving at the Lord’s table, it is important to remember these things.

SERVING AT THE LORD’S TABLE. Whenever we are leading in a worship service, we should

always want to do the best job that we possibly can. What follows are some general suggestions for those who wait at the Lord’s table.

- *Be neatly dressed.* When serving at the Lord’s table, you are waiting at the greatest table in the world! Everything from the way you speak to the clothes you wear should reflect the respect that we have for the Lord, His sacrifice, and His memorial. A coat and tie are certainly appropriate for those waiting at the Lord’s table.

- *Help prepare the minds of the congregation.* Those partaking of the Lord’s supper are to do so while “discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor. 11:19). Therefore, it is appropriate for the one leading this part of the service to make a short talk about the purpose and meaning of this memorial. The reading of a passage of Scripture which speaks of the Savior’s sacrifice or this memorial would also be appropriate. As with anything that you do before the congregation, be sure to speak up loud enough as to be heard by all members of the congregation.

- *Offer a prayer for each emblem of the memorial.* We find example of Jesus doing this when He instituted this memorial as He “blessed” the bread and the cup (Mt. 26:26-27). The purpose of the prayer for the bread and fruit of the vine is to give thanks for it (Lk. 22:19). Be sure to let everyone know that you are about to pray by saying something such as, “Let us give thanks for the bread.”

- *Remain focused on the memorial.* Be careful not to get distracted by the passing of the emblems or by any nervousness you may feel. Remember that as a Christian, you also need to be discerning the Lord’s body as you partake of this memorial.

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MAKING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mike Webb

At some point in almost every service someone makes announcements. Unfortunately, they are not always made in the best possible way. How can we improve this part of our services?

KEYS TO MAKING GOOD ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Collect all the facts beforehand. Be sure you have all the information necessary to make the announcements. For example, if you are announcing an area gospel meeting be sure to find out the place, speaker, date, and times beforehand. The same principle applies to deaths, the sick, special services, etc. Announcements are not a time to ask the audience for pertinent information.

Be concise. Announcements typically take more time than necessary. Limit your announcements to the necessary information. For example, if you are making an announcement concerning a member with the flu do not give all the details about the last time you suffered with the flu. I have seen announcements that lasted for more than fifteen minutes. When services begin in this way, the members are worn out before the service has started good.

Speak up. It does not matter how good your announcements are if they are not heard. Project your voice by looking out at the audience and not down toward the floor. Remember there are usually older people in the audience who may have trouble hearing.

Go over the announcements beforehand. Be sure you have the fact clear in your own mind. If you have time, practice your announcements out loud. If there is a name that you do not know how to pronounce, ask someone who knows for help.

THE CONTENT OF GOOD ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Welcome the visitors. Visitors are honored guests and should be made to feel welcome.

Times of Services. Visitors need to be made

aware of the times that the congregation assembles. Invite them to return to the next service.

Order of services. If visitors know the order, they will know what to expect. Be sure those who are taking a leading role are present.

The sick. We need to be aware of those who are sick so we can pray for them. Be sure to mention the name of the person as well as whether they are at home or in the hospital. If someone asks not to be mentioned publicly, then you should respect their wishes.

Deaths. We should include the name of the deceased, the funeral home, time of visiting, and the time of the funeral.

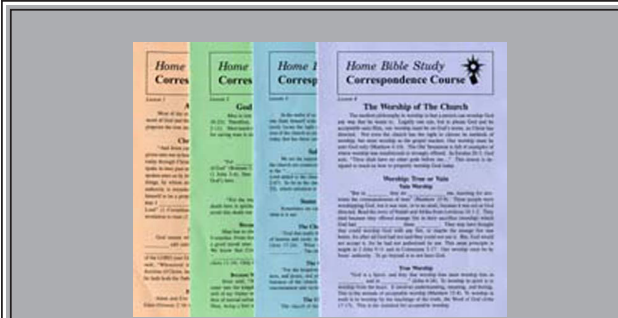
Gospel meetings in the area. Give the necessary information and encourage the congregation to attend.

Special activities. Special Bible classes, radio programs, or a work day are examples of activities to include in the announcements.

Let us work to improve our announcements so we can serve the Lord to the best of our ability.

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READING THE SCRIPTURES PUBLICLY

Marc W. Gibson

The public reading of the Scriptures is a vital part of spiritual worship. We see it practiced in Bible times: Ezra the priest stood before the people of Israel to read the law of God (Neh. 8:1-6); Jesus read from the book of Isaiah in the Nazareth synagogue (Lk. 4:16-21). It is a privilege to read the Scriptures that save us and build us up unto eternal life. Whether the reading is done in a class, sermon, or another point in the worship, careful preparation and good technique will bring good results. We should diligently “give attention to [public] reading...” (1 Tim. 4:13).

PREPARE BEFOREHAND. Reading the Scriptures is too serious to do on the fly, or “cold.” It is important to be familiar with what you are reading so that it is communicated properly. Stumbling over words, unnecessary pausing, and voice troubles can be prevented. Certain preparations should be done beforehand:

Choice of Scripture. If you are given the choice of what you will read, choose a portion of Scripture long enough to give a full hearing of a Bible event or teaching. One or two verses are rarely sufficient to accomplish this. Read from a translation that will match what most of the audience is using.

Learn the text. Learn how to properly pronounce each word that will be read by consulting a Bible or English dictionary that gives a pronunciation guide. Some Bibles use diacritical marks to help in pronouncing names. Nothing distracts a listener worse than stumbling over or mispronouncing words. Also, study the text to understand its teaching so that you can emphasize key phrases.

Study the punctuation. Punctuation marks (periods, commas, semi-colons, etc.) are the road signs of reading. They dictate the inflection, tone, and speed of reading. We should stop at a period,

pause at a comma, and sound inquisitive before a question mark.

Practice. Practice reading over the chosen text several times to be completely familiar with what you will be reading. You may even want to record and listen to yourself. This will help identify problems and improve your technique.

SPEAK UP. Why bother reading if the hearer cannot hear? Speak up or move closer to the microphone so that you can be heard easily. If you are too shy to speak up, let someone else read.

SLOW DOWN. One common problem is that a reader wants to get done too fast. What you are doing is extremely important, so slow down and do it right. Clearly announce twice where your text will be found (specific book, chapter, and verses). You may also want to announce the Bible version you will be reading from, with a short intro giving the context of the reading. This will give time for those turning in their Bibles to find the text. Stand up straight, take a deep breath, relax, and begin reading, enunciating each word clearly.

MAKE IT COME ALIVE. Draw the listener into the reading. If it is a conversation, use your volume (loud or soft) and inflection (high or low pitch) to make them feel they are there. Use the range of your vocal abilities to indicate whether the occasion is funny, sad, tense, or dangerous. Help the hearer feel the emotion, understand the doctrine, and grasp the truth. Since faith comes by hearing the word of God, our public reading of Scripture should be done to the best of our ability!

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MAKING A TALK

Donnie V. Rader

The suggestions of this article relate to making short talks (especially invitations) and do not concern themselves with preaching sermons or teaching classes.

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH INVITATIONS.

Often a brother will give an invitation and do everything but invite someone to obey the gospel. The subject matter may have little or nothing to do with responding to the gospel. Sometimes the “invitation” time is used to address a question that targets some brother or sister. It may be used to rebuke the congregation. When these brethren are finished, little, if anything, has been said that might persuade someone to render obedience.

Some invitations are too long. Five to ten minutes is ample time to remind someone of the need, the plan of salvation, and the urgency to respond now. It is not unusual for some brother to ramble on for fifteen to twenty minutes or more.

Lack of preparation is a problem that is the result of some brother who thinks there is nothing to it.

WHAT IS AN INVITATION? An invitation is inviting someone to do something or be something. It is persuading someone to make the greatest decision of their life. Thus, an invitation is not as much an instructional message as it is a persuading message. This is not a time to talk about any Bible subject. It is not a time for a full-length sermon. It is not a time to address a church problem. It is a time to invite people to obey the Lord, and do so now.

WHAT AN INVITATION NEEDS TO BE. It needs to be brief. Generally, the time allotted for an invitation on Wednesday night or for a singing night

does not lend itself to develop any major points or sub-points very fully.

Focus on this being an invitation. Some topics, while important and Biblical, do not encourage someone to respond. Keep in mind that this may be the last or only opportunity someone may have to hear the invitation of the Lord. Be sure to make it an invitation!

This is not a sermon. This is not the time to develop a discussion on how to be a good husband, improving worship, or refuting institutionalism. Think for a moment about what would encourage you to respond if you needed to do so. Would a twenty minute presentation on Christian growth or a five to ten minute reminder of the need and urgency to be right with God?

Keep it Biblical. Speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). No one can criticize an invitation that is rooted in Scripture. However, one that has little Scripture or focuses on human wisdom could be subject to criticism and does little to encourage a response.

Be clear. Don't leave people wondering what your point is. Don't leave people asking how your points connect. Make sure your listeners know what you are saying.

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SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

Charles Carpenter

The duties or work of elders are found in four words: *feed*, *watch*, *rule*, *ensamples*.

FEED (ACTS 20:28). The word “feed” is an agricultural term illustrating the leading of a flock to pasture, seeing that nourishment is given to them. Elders are responsible for the kind of spiritual food offered to the flock. What is involved is to provide teaching. The practical things are done in three ways: public teaching, class teaching, private teaching. Practical things include: teaching the truth, having good rapport with the preacher, providing and preparing good classroom material, preparing sufficiently when teaching a class, teaching and providing classes for new converts, teaching in homes (yours and theirs) of alien sinners, guiding the flock to proper pasture, relating to the congregation as a father to the home, seeing the importance of spiritual food, teaching and providing classes for the men, teaching and providing workshops for teacher training.

WATCH (ACTS 20:31). The word “watch” is an agricultural term illustrating vigilance to prevent or regain straying members and the resisting of encroachments by wolves, false teachers. What is involved is to provide counsel. The practical things are done in three ways: protect, guard, discipline. Practical things include: acting only as authorized by Christ, watching over every need of the flock, being courageous and faithful, watching on behalf of souls of the flock, warning members about their relationship to God, disciplining when it becomes necessary after patient teaching and encouragement, protecting the sheep (not the kind of animal to protect themselves in the animal world), seeing that the sick and needy are cared for, knowing the spiritual condition of the sheep, loving and praying for the flock, keeping the watch within

and without to avoid danger from either direction, encouraging by one’s presence at the hospital, with the homebound, with the seriously ill.

RULE (HEB. 13:17). The word “rule” is a legal term meaning to control, govern, manage, to go before. It is used as a prescribed guide for conduct or action; it is to guide as to be ruled by those one loves. What is involved is to rule with official authority. The practical things are done in three ways: lead in matters of faith, guide with official authority, steer with good judgment. Practical things include: listening to Christ as the lawmaker, admonishing the church, encouraging the flock, guiding the sheep, separating the sheep from the goats, making decisions out of love for the flock, serving and caring for the sheep, practicing discipline when needed, leading down the narrow path, being alert to the teaching of error and eliminating such, being kind and careful in matters of judgment.

ENSAMPLES (1 PET. 5:3). The word “example” is a term meaning that which is to be followed. It is used as a prescribing guide for imitation or setting the pace. What is involved is to set the pace as one who can be imitated. The practical things are done in three ways: a pattern, a model, a servant. Practical things include: having sufficient time for the work, administering to the needs of the sick, caring for and restoring the erring, seeing that their own lives conform to the will of God, be loyal to the Lord, exemplifying to other members (in purity, in love, in word, and in all manner of living), being an example in visiting, setting the example in attendance at all services, setting the example of liberality through the blessing of giving as opposed to receiving, remembering the pattern (God first, family second, job third), serving in

contrast to being served, being tired in the work but not tired of the work.

TO FAITHFUL ELDERS

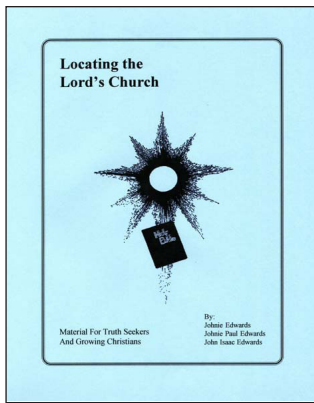
*If you have had a Father's tenderness,
a shepherd's care, a leader's courage
which the cross can bear;
A ruler's care, a mother's watchful eye,
a pilot's skill, the helm in storm to fly;
A fisherman's patience, a laborer's toil, a guide's
dexterity to disembroil;*

*A prophet's inspiration from above, a teacher's
knowledge and a Savior's love;
If all these you have, then you can say in that
great day, 'All present and accounted for Lord';
And to you He will give that 'crown of glory that
fadeth not away.'*

What a load, the shepherd's care!

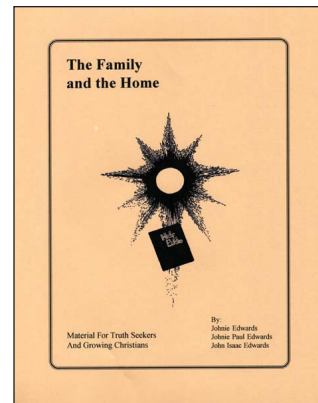
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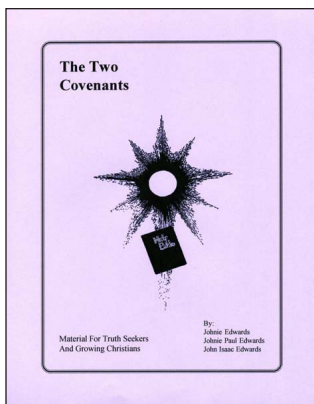
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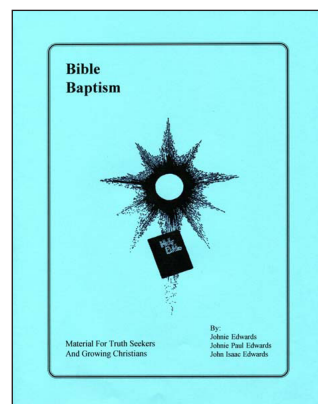
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USING THE OFFICE OF A DEACON

James Hahn

Paul said, “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:13). Using the office of a deacon well is using the office as God has directed in His word. The word “deacon” is from “diakonos” meaning “servant.” In a general sense, all Christians are servants but the word is also used in a special way of those who meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. When a man meets these qualifications, and has been appointed to serve in this capacity, what is involved in his using the office well? The deacon who uses the office well will:

RECOGNIZE BEING A DEACON IS A WORK.

When Paul writes to Timothy setting forth the qualifications of elders or bishops he says, “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1). Therefore, when we speak of “office” it is more than just an honorary title given to someone. It involves responsibility and work.

UNDERSTAND THAT HE IS NOT A CO-ELDER.

God has placed the responsibility of overseeing the local church on elders (also identified as bishops or pastors, Acts 20:17-28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). Deacons, along with all other members, serve under the oversight of the elders. Sometimes we hear brethren, in their prayers, pray for “the elders and the deacons as they oversee this congregation.” This leaves the impression that the work of deacons is the same as that of the elders. Such is not the case.

BE A FAITHFUL SERVANT. Every Christian must be faithful in his or her service to God. The deacon is certainly no exception. When one has been appointed to serve as a deacon he must be ready to faithfully perform the work he has been assigned to

do. One should not agree to be appointed a deacon and not be willing to do the work assigned.

There are many tasks that require someone to see that they are accomplished. In Acts 6, we read of a need that existed in the church at Jerusalem. The apostles gave instructions to the brethren to “look ye out among you” men who possessed the qualities set forth “whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:1-3). These men selected are not referred to as “deacons” but the example of how they were selected would apply to our selection and appointment of deacons. We find men who meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and then appoint them to serve as deacons.

BE READY TO SACRIFICE THE TIME AND EFFORT NECESSARY TO DO THE WORK. I have known of men who would not agree to serve as deacons because they were unwilling to sacrifice the time necessary to do the work. A deacon, as all Christians, must put service to God first (Mt. 6:33).

APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS WORK.

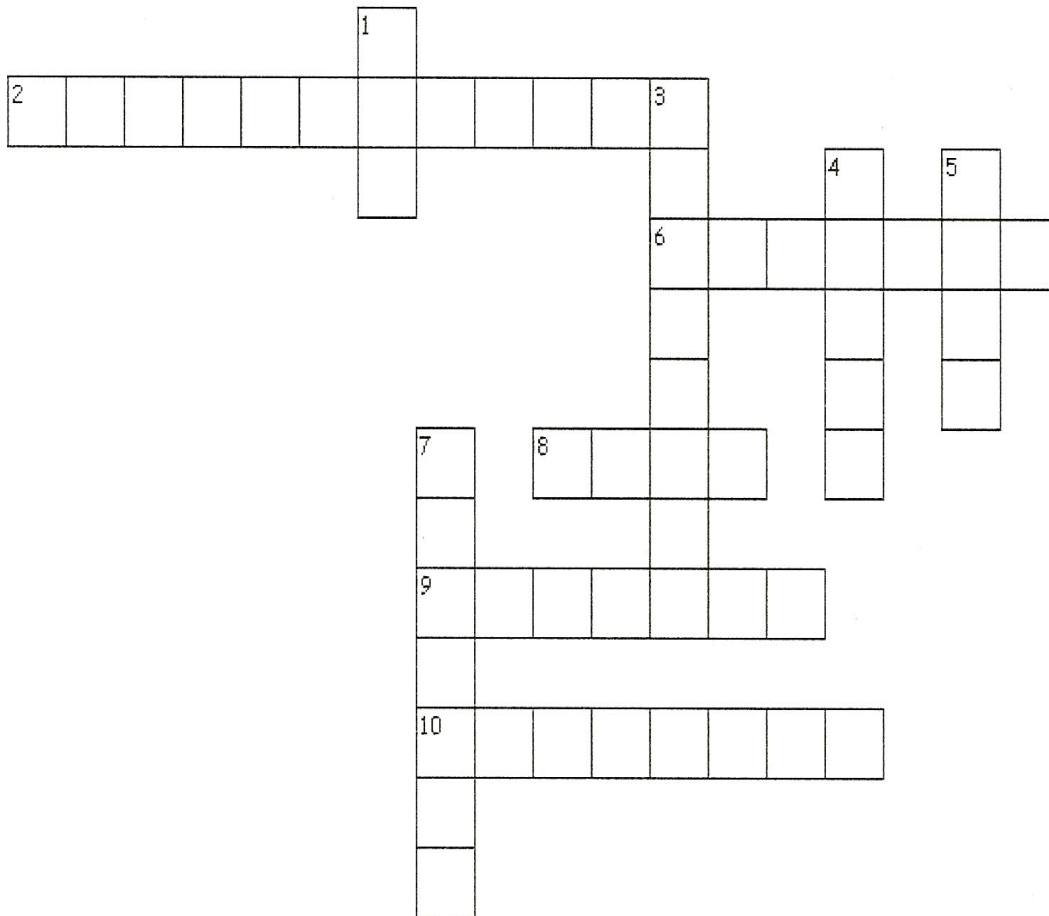
We often hear about the shortage of sound gospel preachers and the need for qualified elders in the Lord’s church. Let me emphasize that we need good deacons in the churches as well. The very qualifications these men must meet means we have faithful, dependable men that will be of great assistance to the elders in performing the tasks assigned them. It may be seeing to the benevolent needs of Christians; seeing that the building and grounds are properly maintained or whatever other task assigned. These men can be depended upon to see that the work is done.

DANVILLE, IN
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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Dedicated Bible Men



ACROSS

- 2. Philippians 2:25-30
- 6. Genesis 12 & 22
- 8. Genesis 6:22
- 9. Acts 7
- 10. Daniel 3:12

DOWN

- 1. Job 13:15
- 3. Daniel 3:12
- 4. 1 Samuel 17:45-46
- 5. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27
- 7. Daniel 3:12

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

DOING THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

Joe R. Price

An evangelist announces the gospel (good news); that is his work. He must do his work without shame or fear (Rom. 1:15-16; 2 Tim. 1:7-9).

Paul charged Timothy before God and the Lord Jesus Christ to “Preach the word!” and reminded him what this requires: “Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul further exhorted Timothy (and every faithful evangelist) to “be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5). You are a minister of Christ to serve his people (Col. 1:7). Therefore, you must know your work and faithfully accomplish it.

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST IS PRACTICAL. Gospel preaching is not speculative, conjectural or theoretical. Such preaching leads to the ruin of the hearers, not their edification (2 Tim. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:3-4). Preaching must be urgent: preach what people need to hear when they need to hear it (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 24:25).

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST REQUIRES PREPARATION. To “preach the word” one must know the word. Fellow evangelist, be a diligent Bible student (2 Tim. 2:15). The Bible is your sermon outline book! Good Bible study habits equip you to do your work and fulfill your ministry (1 Tim. 4:13-15). Give time and attention to learning and growing in your Bible knowledge. Then you will be prepared to “instruct the brethren in these things” and “be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine” of Christ (1 Tim. 4:6).

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST REQUIRES

PERSONAL PURITY. He carefully follows the gospel in his personal life (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:10). He flees lust, pursues righteousness and keeps his heart pure (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:19-22). He is an example to believers (1 Tim. 4:12). The evangelist who preaches the truth but lives a lie loses his audience, his influence, his effectiveness and his soul (1 Tim. 4:16).

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST IS DONE PUBLICLY. The faithful evangelist keeps back “nothing that is helpful” when he preaches (Acts 20:20). Gospel preaching is not about having the “gift of gab”. The pulpit is not for entertaining the audience (Mt. 11:7-8). The preacher who is concerned with impressing his audience instead of making an impassioned gospel plea to his audience is a poor evangelist. The mark of an evangelist is boldness to proclaim the whole counsel of God (Acts 18:24-28; 20:27; Eph. 6:19). Preachers (and brethren) who are more concerned with style than substance have the wrong emphasis. Your work is to preach the word, not to promote your own “excellence of speech” (1 Cor. 2:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:11; Acts 26:28-29).

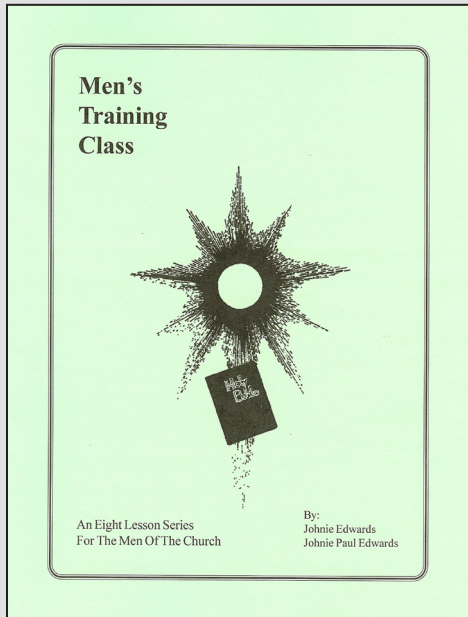
THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST IS DONE PRIVATELY. Paul also taught “house to house” (Acts 20:20). Private Bible classes are needful to teach, to exhort, to encourage and to rebuke. They are a vital part of the evangelist’s work. Sometimes it is the private class and not the public sermon that accomplishes the most good. The Lord’s servant must wisely use private teaching to strengthen the weak and save the lost (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

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