

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THE SERVICE

The operative word is PLANNING. Whilst being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, there is no excuse for being HAPHAZARD.

Sessions 1-3 dealt with the preparation of self and message.

Now observe that THE SERVICE WILL BE THE SETTING OF THE MESSAGE (i.e. the service must help towards the same ends).

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- a. THE SERVICE should make it easier for people to worship.
- b. THE CONDUCTING OF THE SERVICE is a great privilege but a GREATER RESPONSIBILITY.
- c. THE SERVICE is therefore not to be treated LIGHTLY, SUPERFICIALLY nor in a FRIVOLOUS way (If it does not matter much to you, it will not matter much to your hearers).
- d. THE SERVICE will depend a great deal on us as to its 'atmosphere' ('In the Spirit on the Lord's day').
- e. THE SERVICE will not be helped, neither will the people, by 'stunts' of any sort.
- f. THE SERVICE WILL NOT BE HELPED if you give the impression that it is a boring thing, a miserable thing to talk about, or anything of that nature (we have Good News). A pleasant bearing is a great asset; it shows others that you are enjoying the worship and tends to lead them into a like experience.
- g. EVERY PART OF THE SERVICE is important, although not all parts are equally important.

CHOICE OF HYMNS.

- a. HYMNS may be suitable to the theme (i.e. fit in with the message).
- b. HYMNS on big themes should be included because of their tremendous teaching (e.g. Eternal Light).
- c. HYMNS should be suitable to their part in the Service (e.g. opening hymns are usually for worship or praise).
- d. HYMNS should generally be suitable to the age of the congregation (if known in advance).
- e. HYMNS should not all be favourites nor should they all be the lesser known ones.
- f. Not all the HYMNS in the service should be of one type (i.e. 4 lines or 8 lines) nor should all have a chorus.
- g. Spend a lot of time, prayerfully, choosing your Hymns (most hymn books have the Hymns arranged in divisions, which are a big help in making a choice).

ANNOUNCING THE HYMNS.

- a. The number must first be announced CLEARLY (not everybody can read the number board from a distance).
- b. The number must either be repeated or a slight pause made before reading the opening lines.
- c. The number should be repeated after reading the verse.
- d. The reading of the opening lines or verse should be done in such a way as to make the sense obvious (ignore the lines and go for punctuation).

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PRAYERS

- a. These should be neither too long nor too short.
- b. We have the privilege of LEADING the people in prayer – the place for the sermon is later, not in the prayer.
- c. Especially with children, pray WITH them, not AT them.
- d. Include PRAYER PREPARATION in your other preparation (i.e. what items to include, what approach should be made etc.) If necessary, jot down headings for prayer.
- e. Avoid over-familiar language in prayer. You are addressing the Holy, Almighty, Eternal God.
- f. Be confident in the language of your prayer. In Christ, you are approaching your loving Heavenly Father.
- g. Avoid excessive use of well-known phrases in prayer.

THE SCRIPTURE READING

- a. This is a VITAL PART of the service. It is God's Word and the Spirit will honour it.
- b. Read over the portion carefully beforehand, more than once if possible.
- c. Master any difficult words as to pronunciation or meaning.
- d. Choose a passage to fit in with the message or the general line of the service.
- e. Do not be afraid of the Old Testament.
- f. The passage should be neither too long nor too short. Rather have two short passages than one long one.
- g. Put into the reading the BEST OF WHICH YOU ARE CAPABLE and give the sense.
- h. Stick to the Authorised Version for PUBLIC reading.
- i. Announce clearly – Cf – Hymns.

OTHER MATTERS.

- a. Notices and offering. This is not an interval for everybody to talk and shuffle. It will partly depend on how the service is led as to whether this is so.
- b. The offering is an integral part of the service of worship and people should be led to see that this is so.
- c. START ON TIME. Even if there are only a few there. BUT, wait until any folk just coming in are seated before announcing the hymn etc..
- d. FINISH IN GOOD TIME. If many items are to be included in the service, make a rough estimate of the time each item will take and work accordingly (C.I.M.).
- e. The CLIMAX of the service should come at the end. In other words, the service should build up to the application of the message (Solos and testimonies should therefore point forward to what is coming).

FINALLY

You have prayed through the time of preparation.
You have trusted the Holy Spirit in the giving of the message.
You have done the best of which you are capable.

NOW TRUST THAT THE LORD WILL HONOUR HIS WORD AND HIMSELF BRING FORTH FRUIT.