

The Men's Training Class



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(Acknowledgements to John D. Cox, The Men’s Training Class, 1954, used in part to prepare this study)

Lesson One

"There is an urgent need for men-- for strong, fearless, mature, wise, kind and honorable men; for men who bear pain without whimpering, criticism without cowering, and persecution without complaining; for men who have convictions -- deep, vibrant, urgent and compelling convictions to whom compromise is cowardice, surrender unthinkable, and triumph inevitable. We need men who have faith, a faith that is farsighted, giving strength for the present and future; faith that is able to provide hope in adversity, love in turmoil, and which placates present disappointment by future expectation; a faith that moves to act at the slightest command of God, nothing doubting; a faith that moves brethren to step forward because it is right-- despite the fact that there is doubt of personal ability." (Jim McDonald via Pause-Ponder-Profit, 1968)

INTRODUCTION:

The authors have worked together to write a book to help sharpen the leadership skills of those who serve the congregation in public worship. These lessons are presented with the view that as disciples increase in competency and ability in public worship, then orderliness, understanding, and solemnity will increase. By means of preparation and practice, Christians can overcome careless gaffes, rambling, and uncertain sounds that distract the audience's attention and detract from their worship.

Devout Christians desire to grow; it is an integral part of their nature. Likewise, faithful men who serve the local church by leading in worship services also desire to grow and improve in their public work. The apostle Paul told Timothy to study the word and to use his abilities *"that your progress may be evident to all"* (1Tim. 4:13-15). Furthermore, he tells Timothy to commit the principles of the gospel to trustworthy men *"who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Tim. 2:2). Five times in the letter to Titus, Paul tells his fellow evangelist to teach disciples to be prepared to do good works. Beyond all dispute, one must grow in ability to resist temptation, increase in knowledge of God's will, and multiply in good works. Why would one not want to grow in ability to lead others in worship services? As John Viscount Morley of Blackburn wrote: "It is not enough to do good; one must do it the right way."

Additionally, the authors do not wish to establish an orthodoxy for a specific order and structure for worship services. The scriptures do authorize certain worship activities and it describes the manner in which they are to be conducted; but, the word of God does not disclose the number of songs and prayers to be used when disciples gather together before God. The Bible does not reveal whether or not the Lord's Supper should come before or after the collection. Therefore, one may not ordain a certain order of worship as the only acceptable pattern.

It is not the purpose of the authors to debate scruples of individual conscience or current issues that surround scriptural public worship activities. This book is intended simply to provide instruction on the mechanics of public leadership in worship.

The authors encourage the readers to eagerly desire to improve, to aspire to greater service, and to do all things to the greater glory of God. If this book helps you to do that, we will rejoice with you in your growth. (Paul R. Blake, Doug Roush, Larry DeVore, Jim Walsh, Keith Storment)

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS CLASS

It is not the purpose of this class to make preachers, teachers, or elders out of all who attend. It is true, however, that some may be encouraged and developed in doing these great works, but it is the primary purpose of this class to fit all who attend for the

performance of these duties. Therefore, if you have no desire to preach, teach a class, or to serve as an elder of the church, do not conclude that there is no benefit for you to derive from the class. There is plenty to be gained from attending this class as you will see from the following description of its purpose.

The Purpose Of This Class Is:

1. To help you to learn to do in the work of the church that you would like to do, but feel that you could never do. Work in this class will give you and others the opportunity to discover whether or not you have the ability to do what you would like to do. It will help you to satisfy the desire you have to do more in the work of the church.

2. To help you to do what you are now doing but would like to do better.

3. To help you to be prepared to do work in the church you may never expect to do but may be forced upon you some day through unexpected circumstances. You may find yourself in a small congregation where your leadership will be all the congregation would have.

4. To help you to be prepared to recognize opportunities in the vineyard of the Lord that you may be overlooking daily. Training you would receive in this class will help you to "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1).

5 To help you to be convinced that you are neither too old nor too young to develop into greater usefulness in the church. In most cases it is not lack of ability or scarcity of material which causes men and boys in the church to hesitate to try to take a public part such as reading the Scriptures, teaching a class, making a talk, leading in prayer, leading singing, etc., but rather the fear of failure. Few realize that the greatest of all failures is that of not trying! When one does his best, he has not failed, no matter how feeble his efforts. By trying, he has succeeded in doing something worthwhile. And each trial will be a new and more glorious success. The more he tries, the less he will fear failure. Instead of continuing to suffer embarrassment when a mistake is made, he will soon find himself accepting each error as a challenge to do better the next time.

It shall not be the purpose of this course of study to set forth fixed set of rules for speaking. It is the hope of the author that I may be able to offer helpful suggestions, simply stated and as practical as possible. A list of books on the subject of Public Speaking will be given as recommended reading for those who may be interested in a more extensive and technical study in this field.

II. DEFINING WORSHIP

For the purposes of our study, we will be looking at worship from the standpoint of what Christians do when gathered together with other saints upon the first day of the week.

The two Greek words found in the New Testament which are translated as the English words for this type of worship are: (1 *sebomai*, meaning "to revere, stressing the feeling of awe or devotion" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words), and (2 *proskuneo*, meaning "to make obeisance, do reverence to" (Vine's). *Proskuneo* literally means "to move towards as if to kiss the hand." This is the word used by Jesus when He said, "*God is a Spirit. And they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (Jno. 4:24). It is suggested then, that worship is that which is collectively offered to God out of a desire to move closer to Him, to reverence Him, and to bow before Him.

The boundaries of acceptable worship are defined by God Himself: worship must be in "*in spirit and in truth.*" If one seeks to reverence God and offer worship that pleases Him, he must offer it with the right attitude (spirit) and according to His Word (truth). If he violates these principles, one has no guarantee that his worship will be accepted by God. Jesus taught that the Pharisees had done that very thing, when He said: "*This*

people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:8, 9). A Christian can praise God in song, but if he has sin in his heart, he does so in vain. He may partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper, but if his heart is "*far from*" God, then his worship is unacceptable (1 Cor. 11:20-29). If he changes what God has designed, as the Pharisees did, then his worship will also be vain. Substituting apple juice for fruit of the vine is changing what God has designed, and therefore ceases to honor or reverence Him.

It can be said then, that the goal in this study is to discuss doing the right thing (the different activities involved in worship) and doing it in the right way (from the heart). The authors will offer suggestions as to how we believe that this can be accomplished. Each reader must determine for himself if he is doing the best he can to offer worship that is acceptable to God. It is not our design to "make doctrine," but to help strengthen each other, as together we approach the mercy seat of God (Heb. 10:19-25).

III. ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

1. Christian character. Since we are interested in preparing for greater service as Christians, it is well that we consider, at the outset, some things that are essential to serving in a public way as members of the church. Christian character has been listed as the first one because this is logical. Until a member of the body of Christ is earnestly endeavoring to live the Christian life, he should be ashamed to appear in public as a leader of any kind in the work of the church. People who know of his ungodly living will have no confidence in him and he will prove to be a stumbling block in the way of others. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching" (1Tim. 4:16). He charged the elders of the church at Ephesus as follows: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops..." (Acts 20:28) It is significant that in both of these cases he placed first emphasis upon personal living. The proper place to begin an effort to develop as servant of Christ is with Christian living. The talk you make or the prayer you lead will carry far greater weight if those who are in the audience have confidence in YOU because of what you are!

2. A knowledge of the truth. This does not mean that you must know the Bible from "cover to cover." It does not mean that you must be able to quote long passages of Scripture. But, it does mean that when you stand before a group to teach a lesson, or to make a talk, you should know as much as you have been able to learn by careful study what the Bible teaches on that subject. The teacher who openly admits in his introduction that he has not prepared his lesson might as well sit down for all the good he will do. And the teacher who may be unprepared but tries to conceal his ignorance of the subject will not hold the attention of his audience for very long. Study the Bible on the subject you are to talk about so you can talk with confidence, sincerity, and humility.

3. A desire to serve. If you really want to serve, you can. In all probability, you will find that you will not only be able to do all that you desire to do, but you will learn to do far more than you now imagine that you could ever do. Learning to take a public part in the work of the church is like learning to do anything else well. If the desire is not there, you will not have the necessary interest to stimulate effort. But, if you really WANT to improve, YOU will be more surprised than anyone else at the progress you will show in the course of six months. Try it and see!

IV. SUGGESTIONS

Class Motto: "I will try!" No "high pressure" will be used on individuals to get them to serve in the class and worship, but encouragement will be given in every way possible. If there is some particular work you are especially desirous of doing, tell the

class instructor so he can keep this in mind in making assignments. It may be that you wish to have practice reading Scripture or leading singing, etc. If the instructor knows about this, he can give you frequent assignments for doing that. When asked to do any thing, even if it be something you have never tried before, just say, "I will try!" and, so far as you are concerned, the class will be a great success.

When you stand before the class to do anything, just remember that "there is no one here but us." Most, if not all, of those present are "in the same boat with you." Nobody will ridicule you. All are in sympathy with you and are anxious to see you develop.

When assigned to read a passage of Scripture, acquaint yourself with the text. This can be done in but one way, and that is by reading it over and over until you are familiar with its contents. Before you can read in such a way as to express thought, you must know what the thoughts are. Practice reading aloud at home. Stand before the mirror and read to yourself. The best practice for oral reading is to read orally.

When assigned to make a talk, have something to say and say it. Thoughts do not work themselves into a speech; they must be put there by the speaker. Devote as much time and thought as you can to the preparation of your talk. When you stand before the class, remember that no one knows as much about your subject as you do. If you leave out a little of it, the chances are no one will ever know it. If you get the thoughts a little disarranged from the original plan you had in mind, few, if any, will ever notice it.

When assigned to lead in prayer, remember that you are talking to God and not to man. If the prayer is within Scriptural limits and from a sincere heart, God will accept it regardless of what men may think of it. A lesson will be devoted to suggestions for leading public prayer.

Take part in the periods of open discussion. Feel free to offer suggestions to others in the class, but always manifest the right spirit. Request discussion on any point in which you are especially interested or feel the need of.

Lesson Two

I. WHAT IS PUBLIC SPEAKING?

When you and another person sit down and talk about some subject in which you are both interested, you are carrying on a conversation. It may happen that you are better prepared to discuss the subject than the other person. You have some information you desire to impart to him. Or, it may be that he seeks the information which he thinks you have. So, because of this you do most of the talking. You may talk for thirty minutes or an hour without the other person's oral comment, but, just the same, he is participating in the discussion. He is thinking as you talk. He weighs the thoughts which you present. He accepts or rejects what you have to say. What you have to say makes some impression upon his mind. While you are talking, your behavior is natural. The tone of your voice, your facial expression, your breathing, and the movements of your hands are under the control of your mind. All of these are brought into action in such a way as to make what you are saying more effective.

While you are thus talking to this one friend, suppose other interested individuals come along and sit down with you to listen to what you have to say. This continues until there are fifty present. All fifty are just as interested as the first person. All wish to hear what you have to say on the subject. The only difference is the need for increased volume as you speak in order that all may hear, and it is better for you to stand as you talk so all may see. However, what you are trying to do now is exactly the same as what you were attempting when you were talking to one person. So, your tone of voice, facial expressions, breathing, and gestures should still be controlled by your thinking in order that your speech may accomplish the desired purpose of getting your thoughts across to the hearers. The principal difference in what you are now doing and what you were doing before the forty-nine late-comers arrived is that you are talking a little louder and you are standing instead of sitting. What you are saying is the same; the way you are saying it is the same. What is there to be afraid of?

II. WHAT MAKES A SPEECH EFFECTIVE?

Briefly stated, an effective speech is one which holds the attention of the audience and one which has been the means of conveying thought to the audience. It is a mistake to think of a speech as a mere public performance. The speaker who forgets that his audience is an important part of his speech will fail. The speech you are making is important only in so far as it affects your listeners. If you do not speak in such a way as to convey your thoughts to them, provided they make an effort to understand you, your speech is a failure. Many of the comments often heard after a speaker has finished reveal the reasons why some speeches are ineffective. Consider the following remarks about a speaker or his speech: "I thought he would never quit." "He was too deep for me!" "He used too many big words." "I never could get what he was driving at." "His speech was too rambling." "He repeated too much." "He stumbled around with too many 'ers' and 'uhs' and 'ahs.'" "He talked in a monotone." Someone has suggested that the way to make a good speech is "have something to say - say it - then quit."

1. It is certainly important that we have something to say. One who is not willing to make the effort to be prepared to talk should be honest enough with his would-be audience not to accept the responsibility of speaking to it. Every minute that a speaker uses in actually saying something worthwhile represents hours or days, and maybe even years of preparation. It is one thing to stand before audience and "talk", but to stand before an audience with something to say is quite a different matter.

2. Even though the speaker's mind may be filled with valuable thoughts, gathered from careful preparation, if he fails to present them effectively, they may be lost to his audience.

3. One of the most important things for any speaker to know is when to quit. The author well remembers the fatherly advice which he received from an old preacher a few days before he preached his first sermon. The old preacher said "Don't preach with the idea of filling in a certain amount of time. Have your lesson filled with truth well-arranged. Preach your sermon to save souls and quit when you are through." If you are speaking without a time limit having been fixed, do not feel that you are at liberty to talk forever. Be practical. Use enough time to get your thoughts over and sit down. If you have been asked to keep your talk within a certain time limit, do so without apology. It is a mark of conceit for a speaker to feel that the audience wants others to "boil it down" but will be glad to have him "roll on and on!" It may also show a lack of preparation when the speech is prolonged. It takes much more study to be able to present a number of thoughts in twenty or thirty minutes than it does to present the same number of thoughts in an hour or more.

III. "WHAT SHALL I TALK ABOUT?"

When left to choose your own subject, the choice you make will have much to do with how well you succeed. First of all, think of subjects that are important to those to whom you are to speak. From this list choose a subject in which you are interested. Regardless of how important it may be, if you are not interested in it you need not expect to be able to interest your audience. In the third place, select an important subject in which you are interested and which you are capable of handling. You may be interested in some important subject that would be unwise for you to attempt to discuss publicly until you have had more experience. So, use common sense in selecting your subject.

IV. "WHERE SHALL I GET MATERIAL FOR MY TALK?"

Since this is written as a guide to training classes in connection with the work of the church, suggestions as to where material for Bible talks may be found claim our interest. The first place to go for material is to the Bible. However, many good books have been written which prove helpful in preparing talks on various Bible texts and subjects. Elsewhere in this volume, a list of good books will be found. It is important that you have a good copy of the Bible with references, maps, concordance, etc. In addition to your Bible, a good Bible Dictionary and some commentaries are useful. Ideas and suggestions for talks may be found in sermon outline books and old issues of sound Gospel Magazines.

Lesson Three

I. "WHY AM I AFRAID?"

When a person first appears before an audience, it is only natural that he should suffer some stage fright. The extent to which one is frightened may vary with different individuals, but most persons experience some fear at the first. Some may never completely overcome all fear. More will be said of this later. A little reflection will help you to realize that there is not much to fear when you stand to address an audience.

1. There is no need to fear the audience. There are not many occasions in this country when the speaker has grounds to fear that someone in the audience will seek to harm him. True, there may be those who disagree with what he says, and some may even become offended, but even then there is no cause to fear that they will attack you bodily. To express your convictions is your constitutional right. There is nothing to be afraid of from that standpoint.

2. It may be that you fear failure. If you have prepared a lesson which consists of truth, and you do your very best to put it over to your audience, there is one sense in which you have not failed even if you should fail to impress your audience. You have, at the least, succeeded in TRYING! The very fact that you have made an effort to teach the truth of God is a victory for you. It will place you in a better position to be more successful with your audience the next time.

3. If you fear because you feel the lack of preparation, you lessen this cause of fear by giving your best in the preparation of your lessons. However, some fear of failure may prove helpful. So long as you recognize the danger of failing, you are apt to be more diligent in your preparation. Too much self-confidence can be detrimental. You need enough self-confidence that you will try, but not enough to keep you from doing your best.

4. One thing which may contribute to stage fright is self-consciousness. The speaker divides his attention between his speech and himself. He thinks of his hands until they feel as large as hams of meat. The more he thinks of what to do with them, the larger they feel. He feels a slight shaking of the knees and he wonders if the audience sees his shaking trousers' legs. The more he wonders about this, the more his knees shake. Most of this type of fear is the result of his imagination. The audience is not concerned with the size of the speaker's hands, but rather with what he has to say. So, strive to give your speech first place in your thinking, and the more you concentrate on it, the smaller your hands will feel and the quieter your knees will become until you are no longer more conscious of them than when you are engaged in a conversation with one person.

II. "HOW MAY I OVERCOME FEAR?"

By careful consideration, learn the things you need to do and the things you need to overcome in order to improve your efforts. Having learned your needs, make a determined effort to improve along these lines. This will give you confidence.

Learn how to prepare your talk and work diligently at preparing it. Use every opportunity you have to speak. Most mistakes in speaking can be corrected through practice. The only place to learn to swim is in the water. You may read a whole library of instruction on swimming, but if you never practice, you will never be able to swim. Given enough practice and the average individual can swim well with but little instruction. The same is true of speaking in public. Books by the dozens may be read on rules and theories governing the art of public speaking, but without practice one can never expect

to learn to talk in public. A little instruction and a lot of practice is far better than much instruction with little practice. So, practice, practice, practice!

Don't expect a miracle by expecting your fear to disappear suddenly. It will gradually decrease as you continue to practice speaking. However, if you never succeed in overcoming fear completely there is nothing to be alarmed about. Famous actors, great preachers, and others have been known to suffer some from fear at times as long as they lived. However, one who never overcomes it completely can learn to "live with it" in such a way as to keep it from being a hindrance.

Lesson Four

I. THREE MEANS OF EXPRESSION

As was pointed out in Lesson One, public speaking is the art of one person conveying the thoughts of his mind to the mind the audience. To do this, he must give expression to his thoughts. This is done in three ways: by words, tones, and gestures.

Words -- what we say

1. The speaker should cultivate the practice of selecting the proper words to express his thoughts. Efforts should be made to enlarge and improve the vocabulary. Frequent use of the dictionary when reading and while preparing a talk will help in this respect.

2. The words we use should be correctly pronounced and distinctly spoken. The effectiveness of the speech will depend to a great extent upon the clearness of the words spoken. Words that are chopped off, or slurred, or flatly spoken will do much to destroy effectiveness of the speech. Don't "chew your words!" Open your mouth and speak out!

Tones -- how we say it .

1. The tone of the voice does much toward revealing the attitude of the speaker's mind. Emotions of joy and sorrow, anger and pity, hostility and friendliness are expressed by tone color or the lack of it.

2. True tone color is regulated by the mind and by natural breathing. It is not to be affected by intentional and mechanic handling of the voice. To thus affect tone color often becomes offensive to the hearer. It may make the speech ineffective by causing the audience to doubt the sincerity of the speaker.

3. Cultivate the practice of deep breathing. This will help to enrich the tone of your voice.

Gestures -- How we act when we say it.

1. Definition of "gesture": "A motion of the body or limbs expressive of sentiment or passion; any action or posture intended to express an idea or a passion, or to enforce an argument, opinion, etc." (Twentieth Century Dictionary)

2. A gesture should be the result of the body giving expression to the speaker's frame of mind in a natural way just as the tone is the result of the effect of the speaker's attitude of mind on his voice. Gestures should not be mechanical. If the speaker relies upon carefully planned gestures, he may get confused and make the wrong gesture at a given point in his speech. Or, like one speaker is reported to have done, he may hit the table with his fist several seconds after his strong point has been made. Actually, gestures should never be made except when the speaker feels the need of them to emphasize the thought he is expressing.

II. AVOIDING A MONOTONE

With reference to the art of speaking, the Twentieth Century Dictionary defines "monotone" as "a sameness of sound, or the utterance of successive syllables in one unvaried key, without inflection or cadence." Nothing is more distracting when listening to a reader or a speaker than for him to "grind" along in the same tone with no rising or falling of the voice on key words and at the end of a sentence.

Textbooks which are designed to train the students as professionals in the art of public speaking devote pages to a discussion of inflection, change of pitch, pause, loudness, phrasing, etc. But for the average student in this course of study, a number of general statements will suffice.

No fixed rules for lowering or raising the voice while reading or speaking can be set forth. The best readers are those who THINK and FEEL. That is, if the speaker has a clear grasp of the thoughts to which he is seeking to give expression and if his emotions are controlled by those thoughts, the change in thought and feeling will naturally call for a change in pitch. There may be cases where, because of a physical defect, one's voice may be lacking in flexibility and for this reason it is impossible to give natural expression to one's thoughts and feelings through the modulation of the voice. But, in most cases those who read or speak in a monotone do so because they do not have clearness of thought and/or do not "feel" what they are attempting to present.

In view of the foregoing general statements, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Before attempting to read or speak, become thoroughly acquainted with the thoughts you are to present. Form a mental picture of the ideas. Remember, you cannot give to others that which you do not have. It is impossible to present with clearness ideas and thoughts to others which you do not have clearly fixed in your own mind.

2. "Feel" your thoughts. If you are to present a talk in which you wish to convince your audience that a certain proposition is right, you must first be thoroughly convinced within your own mind that the proposition is true. If you are seeking to warn your hearers against some impending danger, you must first be fully aware of the danger. If you are presenting a message of joy or of sadness, unless you feel happy or sad about it, as the case may be, your delivery will lack force and in all probability you will grind along in the same tone of voice.

3. Be yourself. Being yourself includes giving way to your own frame of mind while speaking. If you try to plan ahead of time just when and where to raise or lower your voice, etc., you will be mechanical and unnatural in your delivery. This will tend to destroy the effectiveness of your speech. It is good to watch and listen to good speakers for the purpose of learning by observation, but it is a mistake to try to "copy" another speaker. The result of such effort will be a double failure. (1) You will fail to be like the speaker you are trying to copy. (2) By trying to be like him you will do the best of which you are capable. So be yourself! But, seek to be yourself developed and improved.

4. Again, we emphasize the value of practice. Just as stage fright and other hindrances can be conquered by practice, so it is with learning how to handle the voice properly. Read about it if you wish. This is good. But, all of your reading will be in vain without diligent practice. So, use every opportunity this class and other occasion, afford you to practice, practice, practice!

Lesson Five

I. POSTURE

This has to do with the position of the body while before audience. Such questions as "How should I stand?", "What shall do with my hands?", "Should I move around or stand still?" often give the beginner great concern.

The following suggestions should prove helpful:

1. Try to be as natural as possible in the way you handle yourself on the platform, yet never allow your "naturalness" to reach the point of carelessness.
2. As a general practice, one should stand erect, holding his head up enough to be able to look at his audience so as to keep his contact with the hearers while, at the same time, he should avoid "looking down his nose" at his audience. The position of the body should be changed enough to avoid the appearance of stiffness. If speaking behind a stand, it is well to hold to it occasionally, but NEVER lie down on it! The speaker should be enough at ease to move his feet at times, even taking a few steps in one direction or the other. However, not many speakers can hold the attention of the audience while they pace back and forth constantly.
3. One thing that is almost certain to divide the attention of the audience between the speaker and his actions is for him to constantly twirl his glasses, play with his handkerchief, thumb a piece of chalk from one hand to the other, etc.
4. The speaker should seek to cultivate the practice of handling himself in such a way as to help emphasize his thoughts rather than to detract from them.
5. This is something else that must come with practice. Learn to think on your feet. This will help you to be more at ease and to assume the proper position on the platform. The only way to learn to think on your feet is to give yourself the opportunity by appearing before an audience.

II. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

When your time comes to speak, walk to the platform briskly with the appearance of alertness and purpose. Do not run, but do not drag your feet timidly. Step with determination.

As you take your position, take a deep breath. This will serve to relax your muscles and add force to your first statements. As you wait for attention, look your audience over. This will help you to command attention and it will give you the needed feeling that, while you are addressing the audience, you are the master of the situation. Never go before an audience without giving attention to your appearance. Neatness of appearance will do much toward gaining the respect of your audience. In addition to clean hands, clean and well shaven face, see that your hair is combed. Your clothes need not be the finest, but they should be clean and well pressed. The dust should be brushed from your shoes. Put all pens and pencils in the INSIDE pockets of your coat. Never get before an audience (whether it be to speak, read, lead the singing, to help serve the Lord's Supper, or to usher) with some other book or paper sticking out of your pocket. Surely some place can be found to store it while you are before the audience!

(Suggested forms for the following leadership activities: announcements, scripture reading, presiding or serving at the Lord's Table, closing comments.)

Announcements:

1. Arrive for services early in order to collect all necessary information; check News & Notes section of bulletin.
2. Organize information in the following format:

- a. Greeting and welcome
- b. Listing of the sick
- c. Listing of the absent for work or travel
- d. Listing of activities... special classes, meetings, etc.
- e. Order of services
- f. Introduce the song leader and announce the first song

Closing comments:

- 1. Do not repeat the announcements unless absolutely necessary.
- 2. Welcome visitors to return; announce next service time.
- 3. Call on someone for prayer.

Scripture reading:

- 1. Get scripture to be read from scheduler well in advance of services and read through it carefully. Practice reading it aloud if necessary, and consult a Bible dictionary for the pronunciation of difficult words.
- 2. When it is time to read, move briskly into position and announce the location of the reading in a loud, clear voice. Repeat the text a second time.
- 3. Read loudly and clearly, placing emphasis where necessary. Avoid using a monotone as well as any other tones or gestures that would draw attention away from the scripture.

Serving at the Lord's table:

- 1. When serving at the table, stand at parade rest (more or less). Gaze forward without staring at any one individual.
- 2. Do not put your hands in your pockets, move around, or do anything else that will draw attention to yourself.
- 3. When serving the congregation, stand attentively and quietly at the end of the row without staring at the individuals who are partaking. Be alert to your partner and coordinate your efforts smoothly. Avoid confusion. Be concerned to see that everyone gets served.

Presiding at the table:

- 1. Plan what you are going to say and do before ever getting up to the table. Review the steps you will go through at the table in your mind so that there will be no confusion at the table.
- 2. When making remarks at the table, speak to be heard in the back of the room.
- 3. Handle the trays with deliberation so as not to drop or spill them. Regulate your words and movements with solemn dignity.
- 4. Identify each part of the service without using excessive detail.
- 5. Remember that observing the Lord's Supper in memory of Christ's passion and death is perhaps the most solemn activity we will engage in during our life on earth. Never allow it to become casual or routine.

Remember when serving the congregation in any of these capacities that you are a servant in a leadership position. Keep the humble mind of a servant while discharging the responsibilities of a leader. Give the Lord and your fellow Christians your best. Do NOT prepare at the last minute, nor treat your duty casually, nor serve carelessly. Every man between the ages of 18 and 88 can benefit by practice, preparation, and pressure. From the opening "welcome" to the final "amen" every work in the assembling together is important.

Lesson Six

I. THREE TYPES OF BIBLE TALKS.

1. Textual. The speaker selects a verse or a few verses of Scripture as his text and starts from it in preparing the lesson to be presented. The topic for the talk is suggested by the text; also the field of thought to be covered is determined by the nature of the text.

2. Topical. The speaker selects a topic to be discussed. He may choose to talk on the subject of "Love," or "Obedience," etc. In such a lesson, he endeavors to present in logical arrangement of that which the Bible teaches upon the subject. In choosing a topic, the speaker should take the circumstances into consideration. He should consider the needs of his audience. He should also take his own knowledge and ability into consideration. For example: A beginner might do an excellent job speaking on the subject of "Faith" whereas it might be unwise for him to undertake to speak on "The Sin Against The Holy Spirit."

3. Expository. The speaker attempts to explain or analyze a verse, or a paragraph, or even a chapter. Those who have had little experience may find it easier to present this type of lesson. A beginner can usually draw excellent lessons from the account of the Prodigal Son, or the Rich Fool, or the Parable of the Sower. One thing to be avoided in attempting this type of talk is that of becoming tedious to the audience by giving too much attention to minor details.

II. OUTLINING YOUR TALK

An outline is simply a brief summary of the thoughts you plan to present in logical arrangement. An outline should be kept as simple as possible. Different preachers have their own plan of outline. Most of the plans that are used are similar in style. To help you learn to outline your lessons in order that you may be able to present them with greater clearness, the following plan is suggested:

1. TITLE
2. TEXT: List reference of Scripture to be read.
3. INTRODUCTION: Appropriate remarks in greeting audience and introducing the subject. The aim or purpose of the lesson should be given here. Any definition of the terms contained in the title, etc.
4. MAIN DIVISIONS: These should be arranged in logical order. Limit the number of main divisions as much as possible, but use the necessary number to fully develop the subject. It is well for the beginner to plan talks which need only three or four main divisions.
5. SUB-DIVISIONS: These consist of minor points given in support of the main divisions. Sometimes it is necessary to sub-divide the sub-divisions.
6. CONCLUSION: Final application of the lesson to the audience. Present an appeal to the hearers to act on the truths which have been presented.

The following form for this plan is as follows:

Title:

Text:

Introduction:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I. Main Division

A. Sub-division

- 1. Sub-division
 - a. Subdivision
 - b.
 - 2.
 - B. etc.
 - II. Main Division
 - A. etc.
- See the example of an outline below:

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Text: 1 Peter 2:13,
INTRODUCTION:

- 1. The text tells us that it is possible for God's children to grow,
- 2. It tells us that it is God's will that they should grow,
- 3. It tells us how we may grow.

I. IMPORTANCE OF GROWTH.

- A. As seen in the natural realm.
 - 1. The plant bears fruit only through the process of growth.
 - a. Corn.
 - b. Apple.
 - 2. Full-grown animal comes only through growth.
 - 3. An infant grows to be a man.
 - a. Do not expect as much of an infant as we do of a grown man.
 - b. Neither do we expect infants to remain infants forever.
- B. As seen in the spiritual realm.
 - 1. Impossible to have a strong and well developed child of God without Christian growth.
 - 2. God does not expect as much of a newborn babe in Christ as He does of older members.
 - 3. Neither does He expect to see His children remain babes.
 - a. When growth is not evident, He is displeased.
(Heb. 5:11-13)
 - b. Example: Laodiceans (Rev 3:14-22).

II. ESSENTIALS TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

- A. In this respect, also, spiritual growth is comparable to physical growth.
- B. The proper food.
 - 1. Proper dieting consists of eliminating the wrong kind of food and including the right kind.
 - 2. Instructions for doing this are given in the text.
- C. The proper environment.
 - 1. Physically, this consists of ventilation, lighting, sanitation.
 - 2. Spiritually, it consists of avoiding evil in all forms (1Cor. 15:3; Rom. 12:9).
- D. The proper exercise.
 - 1. Without it the physical body cannot develop and remain strong.
 - 2. Same is true of the spiritual man (Heb. 5:11-14).
 - 3. Spiritual exercise consists of--
 - a. Prayer (2Thes. 5:16, 17).
 - b. Worship (Matt. 4:10; Heb. 10:25).
 - c. Self-denial (Matt. 16:24).
 - d. Service (Mk. 9:35).

e. Steadfastness (Acts 2:42; Jas. 1:2-4).

E. The proper clothing - humility (1Pet. 5:5).

III. SOME BENEFITS OR ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

A. Ability to discern good and evil (Phil. 1:9, 10).

B. Fruit-bearing (Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:9-11).

C. Ability to teach others (Heb. 5:11-14).

CONCLUSION:

1. It should be the desire of every child of God to become and to be the strongest Christian it is possible for him to be.
2. To sinners: Before you can experience Christian growth, you must first become a Christian (Briefly relate the terms of pardon to an alien sinner and appeal to those in the audience).

III. THE PROPER USE OF NOTES

The author recommends, unreservedly, the practice of making a written outline of the lesson to be presented. This will make for unity. It will serve to discipline the speaker in his presentation of the lesson. The speaker who prepares his lesson from an outline which he has written out is far less likely to ramble in his talk than the man who makes no written outline.

Whether one carries his notes to the platform and refers to them as he speaks is purely a matter of choice. However, given a sufficient amount of time to make preparation, the average speaker can train himself to speak more effectively without notes. If one prefers to use notes as he speaks, he should train himself to look at them as little as possible, and then to do it as inconspicuously as possible. Do not allow your notes to become your master.

Lesson Seven

I. LEADING IN PUBLIC PRAYER

Prayer is important and yet in our assemblies for worship we often treat it as though it were "a necessary evil." The one who leads the prayer may mumble so that he can be heard only a few feet away. Sometimes the only way the audience knows that the prayer has been finished is by the rustling of the audience as the people gradually "catch on" that the brother has finished. In other cases, the prayer may be so poorly worded that it is difficult for the hearers to comprehend it and follow the leader. On other occasions the wording of the prayer may be so inappropriate as to miss the mark altogether.

It is not the intention of the author to be critical of those who do their best with sincerity of heart to lead an audience in prayer. However, there are a number of "little things" that need to be watched. With a little thought and effort, the average man can help to draw the worshippers closer to God by the way he directs their minds in prayer. The author assumes that those who are engaged in this course of study understand that, for any prayer to be acceptable to God, it must be from a sincere heart and must be within Scriptural limits. This discussion has to do, primarily, with the oral part of the prayer. When a man attempts to lead a congregation of worshippers in prayer, he is definitely under obligation to proceed in such a way that the congregation can be led by him!

II. HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

1. Do not pray too long to impress others. Some of the most impressive prayers in the Bible are short. Your ability to lead the minds of all in the audience is limited to a few minutes. It is not necessary to go into a lot of minor details and explanations in your prayer.

2. Speak out with enough volume to be heard by the person who is the greatest distance from you in the building. Remember, if the audience can't hear what you say, you are not leading the people in prayer. Don't stick your head down between the benches and cover your face with your hands and expect to be heard by many. The face should be lifted enough to send your voice out over the audience. Pronounce your words distinctly.

3. Try to avoid repeating certain words or expressions over and over in your prayer. Some who lead in prayer fall into the practice of beginning or ending every statement with the same expression. This makes it more difficult for the audience to concentrate on what you are saying.

4. An orderly and simple presentation of the things that are in our hearts may be cultivated by keeping in mind what prayer is. It is simply talking to God. This talk to God should consist of the following elements: praise, thanksgiving, confession of sins, petitions for ourselves and others.

5. Prayer should not be used by the leader as a means of "getting" someone in the audience "told" on some point. Preaching should be done in sermons and not in the prayer. So, do not preach a sermon on baptism, the evils of denominationalism, the importance attending worship, etc., in your prayer. Remember that you are praying to God WITH the audience instead of praying TO the audience.

III. UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PRAYER

Prayer is the other side of Bible Study. When we, with open and receptive minds, study the Bible, God is talking to us. When we pray, God is giving us the wonderful

opportunity to talk to Him in return. Through prayer, Christians can move the Hand that moves the universe (Jas. 5:16-18). Thus we should not take this part of our worship service lightly. The Lord of Heaven and earth invites us to come into His presence. Those who would lead a congregation of His people before the Great I AM should soberly consider how they are to proceed.

Based on a misunderstanding and an improper application of Matthew 6:5-6, some have thought it improper to pray in public. But, Jesus is not condemning the practice of public praying, rather the motivation that leads one to pray in public. In the first description of a worship service in the first local church, prayer is specifically mentioned (Acts 2:42). The book of Acts furnishes more than one example of "prayer meetings" where groups of believers assembled to pray (Acts 4:23-31, 12:5,12, 20:36). And in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul clearly indicates that prayer was a part of the assembled worship of the church: "What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also..." (v 15) spoke the apostle in a context where he makes it clear that the whole church was assembling together (v 23). Thus, it is clearly mandated that prayer be a part of our assembled worship, as well as our private lives. Christians should "pray without ceasing" in all times and in every place (1 Thes. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8).

Why should we pray in the public assembly? Besides the general efficacy of prayer, Paul suggests a specific purpose in 1 Corinthians 14. After stating that one could pray in a foreign language (an unknown tongue) and, by implication, satisfy his personal need to pray, Paul goes on to state that this would not satisfy the need of the listeners to be edified -- to be spiritually strengthened (vs 16, 17). Thus, the primary purpose of prayer in the assembly, from the human side, is to strengthen and build one another up. This provides the ultimate dilemma for those who lead public prayers: on the one hand, their human audience should be the furthest thing from their minds as they focus their attention on their Divine Lord; on the other hand, those present must ever be in their minds as they seek to convey their wants and wishes to the Father.

Necessary Qualities For Those Who Lead Public Prayers:

First, those leading public prayers should be faithful Christians. If our hearts and lives are not right with God, our prayer is an abomination (Prov. 28:9). One who is unwilling to deal with sin in his life should not presume to lead a congregation in prayer, and if a church is aware that an individual is unfaithful to God, they should not call on him to word the public prayers of the church.

The men leading in public prayer should realize the seriousness and importance of prayer. Those who doubt the power of prayer will not be heard by God (Jas. 1:6-7). Those who trust in the power of prayer can accomplish great things (Mt. 21:21-22).

They should accept the fact that they are speaking for the whole congregation. Those who listen need to be able to say "Amen" at the end of our prayers. This is not a time to pour out our private needs. Those should be dealt with privately (Mt. 6: 5-6). Those who lead the public prayers should seek to become closely acquainted with as many of the members as they can, so they can better voice their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, rejoicings and requests to the Father. Certainly they need to speak as loudly and distinctly as possible so that all may hear and understand. If they realize their voice is weak and a public address system is available to help them, they should not be too proud to take advantage of it.

They should be sincere and natural. Remember, those who are called on to lead in public prayer are being called on to lead the hearts and minds of their fellow Christians into the presence of God. They are not being asked to show others how much they know about the Bible or to impress others with their talent for expressing themselves (Mt. 6:5). Our public prayers should be easy to understand, expressed in

plain and simple language so that those praying with us can truly feel that they have basked in the loving Presence of God.

They should make the prayer fit the occasion. Later, we will look in detail at some of the specific types of prayers that one might be called on to lead in the assembly. Here I would establish the general principle that we should make sure the prayers we word are appropriate to the occasion. In our public prayers, as in all we say, we should speak "what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 5:29).

The Nature of Public Prayers:

Public prayers should be addressed to God (Mt. 6:9). One should not begin "our Father who is in Heaven" and then proceed to address the assembly.

Public prayers should offer praise to God (Mt. 6:9). God is our Creator and our spiritual Liberator. It is always fitting to praise, honor, and adore His name in our prayers.

Public prayers should offer thanksgiving to God. God is the Giver of all good gifts and the Sustainer of our lives (Jas. 1:17; Acts 17:25) who has also chosen to bestow on us all spiritual blessings in His Son (Eph. 1:3). Thus we should always express our gratitude for past, present, and future blessings that flow from His bountiful hand (Phil. 4:6; Heb. 13:15).

Public prayers should make confession of sins and petition God for forgiveness. Since we all sin (Rom. 3:23), and since sin hinders our prayers (Isa. 59:1-2), and will cause God to reject all of our worship (Isa. 1:10-17), certainly all of our services should begin with an acknowledgment of sin and an earnest entreaty for God's mercy (1 Jno. 1:9; Acts 8:22).

Public prayers should include petitions to God (Phil. 4:6). Here we recognize our dependence on God and request of the Father those things we perceive as being our needs (Mt. 7:7-11). Of course, our petitions should always be offered in humble submission to the will of God, accepting the fact that He knows what we truly need (1 Jno. 5:14).

Public prayers should often intercede for others (1 Tim. 2:1). Here we especially pray on behalf of others who may not even be present, taking their needs before the Father (Jas. 5:16).

Public prayers should be offered in the name of Jesus (Jno. 14:14). This does not mean that we have to say "in the name of Jesus" at the end of our prayers. We should do all "in the name of the Lord" (Col. 3:17), but we do not conclude every act of worship or service to God by vocalizing the name of Jesus. Rather, praying in the name of Jesus means that we should recognize His unique and special place as our High Priest and only Mediator with God (1 Tim. 2:15) when we pray. And, certainly there is nothing wrong with vocalizing this recognition when we pray, and in view of common practice perhaps it would even be wise to do so. But, let us also recognize that "praying in the name of Jesus" involves much more than saying a trite phrase at the conclusion of our prayers. (1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 4:14-16)

Specific Types Of Prayers In The Assembly:

The Opening Prayer. This will usually be the most general and the longest prayer in the assembly. It is also one of the most important, as this prayer, along with the opening song, will go a long way in setting the mood for the rest of the worship service.

The one who is to lead this prayer should pay special attention to the announcements to see what specific needs should be addressed in his prayer. If the announcements are not made before the opening prayer, it would be good for the one

leading the opening prayer to confer with the one making announcements in order to have this information in hand when he words the prayer.

The opening prayer should open with words of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving to God. This will help people to center their minds on the High and Holy One they are addressing. A number of petitions and intercessions are in order during the opening prayer. We should confess our sins and ask forgiveness for them so that our prayers might not be hindered. We should ask for the strength to overcome future temptations. We need to pray for our civil rulers, for those who teach the gospel, for members who are sick, who are traveling, who are mourning, who may have other problems. It is certainly in order to ask for the strength and wisdom to worship in a proper manner. All of these petitions should be worded as specifically as we possible can make them and still remain general enough to voice the needs and concerns of everyone present.

Prayers At The Lord 's Supper. When one is asked to give thanks for the unleavened bread or the fruit of the vine, one should remember that these prayers are very specific. This is not the time to pray for anything and everything. Sometimes a dear brother, when asked to give thanks during the Lord's Supper, will do everything but that! Let us also remember that we are Christians who are thanking God for the memorial of His Son's death, not Catholic priests who are asking God to bless the sacraments. We should also be careful not to confuse God the Father with God the Son. Some, in praying to God the Father, will thank Him for "your body which was given on the cross" No, God the Father did not die on the cross. God the Son did.

Prayer When Taking up The Collection. If such prayers are offered, they should be very specific. One asked to lead such a prayer might offer thanksgiving to God for our material prosperity, petition the Father that each search their hearts and give in the proper spirit, and ask for wisdom in properly using the funds collected.

Prayers For Those Who Confess Public Sin. James 5:16 commands us to do this. This is definitely an intercessory prayer; it has been requested by and is on behalf of a brother or sister who has acknowledged sin in his or her life, demonstrated repentance, and asked our petitions in their behalf; hence, this prayer's structure should surround the needs of that Christian. This prayer should include thankfulness for God's provision of salvation, for the humbleness of one who would so confess their sin, and for their examples in showing our need for God and His help. Then one should specifically petition God for forgiveness, for strength and comfort, and the help of fellow saints.

Prayer For One Who Has Just Been Baptized. Again, we should stress that such prayers should be specific in nature. Some appropriate elements for this prayer would again be thanksgiving and intercessory petitions. We should be thankful for God's grace and the sacrifice of Christ that has made salvation possible and for the faith that one has demonstrated in being willing to obey the Lord's command. We need to ask God to help them remain faithful and to help us to help them grow and continue steadfast in service to the Lord.

Prayer To Open A Class. Once more, a specific situation calls for a specific prayer rather than the general petition of a prayer designed to open a worship service. Some elements that would enter into this prayer would be praise to God for His word, thankfulness for a time of study and for having the Bible as a guide, and petitions for proper attitudes to prevail, for the teacher and the class to have wisdom and understanding, and for a willingness to apply and use what is learned.

Prayer To Close A Service. Closing prayers should close. Dismissal prayers should dismiss. At the end of services, there is no need to repeat and rehash everything that was said in the opening prayer. God's memory is not that short! Some things that one might include in a closing prayer would be thankfulness to God for the opportunity to

worship, and for the benefits we have received and petitions for faith and courage to apply the message, and for God's spiritual and physical safekeeping.

Mistakes To Avoid:

Develop the habit of private prayer. If you simply do not know how to pray, ask a more spiritually mature Christian to help you learn (Lk. 11:1). Then, make prayer a constant part of your everyday life (Lk. 18:1; 1Thes. 5:17). You will not be comfortable leading others in their prayers, if you are not comfortable with praying to God.

Do not hesitate to write down your prayers if you do not feel comfortable talking extemporaneously. If you know in advance that you will be leading a prayer, there is nothing wrong with taking the time to write down the prayer you want to lead and reading from your notes while you pray. A prayer on paper can be just as sincere as one spoken off the cuff. After all, no one questions the sincerity of a preacher or Bible class teacher who outlines his material ahead of time and refers to his notes frequently while presenting the material. Why should prayer be any different?

Be carefully not to pray for the purpose of impressing others (Mt. 6:5). Such is hypocritical and makes a mockery of prayer. Hopefully, others will be helped to draw closer to the Father by the prayers we lead, but our motivation should never be to have someone say, "My, what a beautiful prayer Brother so and so led!"

We need to be careful of repetition in our prayers (Mt. 6:7). Not all repetition is bad. Jesus prayed the same prayer with the same words three times in the Garden. But repetition can become vain and useless and hinder our prayers. We need to be careful lest we use empty phrases and meaningless words just to "stretch out" a prayer to the proper length. Likewise, there are clichés that brethren have used so often in their prayers that they have virtually lost all meaning: "He who came to this low ground of sin and sorrow" --"those who are sick of this congregation" -- "bring us back at the next appointed time" --"give the speaker of the hour a ready recollection" and a host of others. While such phrases may certainly convey scriptural thought and may be offered with sincerity, I am afraid that sometimes they simply reflect a lack of initiative. Rather than expend the effort to think of fresh ways to convey to the Father the intents of our heart, we allow ourselves to get in a rut and repeat the same tired phrases over and over. Prayer, as with all worship, needs to be fresh and edifying, not routine and ritual.

Lesson Eight

I. SCRIPTURE READING

Historically, scriptures were read whenever God's children came together. In Deuteronomy 27, Moses called the children of Israel together to hear the reading of the Law. When Judah returned to Jerusalem and Nehemiah led them in rebuilding the city, Ezra the scribe stood before the people and read to them from the Law for three hours (Neh. 8:1-12). When Jesus went into the Nazareth synagogue on the Sabbath, He read a scripture (Lk. 4:16).

From the day of Pentecost to today, the reading, quoting, and preaching of the scriptures has led to the salvation of millions. From the disciples at Jerusalem in their daily teaching (Acts 5:42) to the Bereans in their daily search of the scriptures (Acts 17:11-12), New Testament Christians read the scriptures to obtain and maintain faith (Rom. 10:17).

Reading the scriptures when we come together to worship renders honor to God and His word. In addition, when we publicly read the scriptures, we are reminded of our dependence on God for guidance and authority for all that we do. Finally, we are edified and enlightened by the reading of holy writ in the assembly. The scripture reading is a spiritually profitable activity for the saints who gather to worship.

Procedure:

Preparation for the scripture reading begins before the Lord's Day. The reader should obtain the requisite text with as much time as his skill level requires that he practice. He should read the scripture through aloud to spot any difficulties in advance. Words that are hard to pronounce should be looked up in a dictionary for proper pronunciation. The reader should repeat his vocal reading of the scripture until he becomes confident with the text.

On the day of the reading, one should dress appropriately for public service in worship and take the Bible with which he is most comfortable. The passage should be marked, or the Bible should be opened to the correct page to avoid a delay due to searching for the right scripture. At the designated time, the reader should rise with dispatch and walk briskly to the lectern.

The reader should briefly announce his purpose and the scripture to be read. After pausing for a few seconds, he should repeat the scripture reference. The reader should then begin reading all the assigned verses clearly and unhesitatingly. When finished, he should leave the lectern and return to his seat in an orderly fashion.

Suggestions:

Before accepting the responsibility to read scriptures in the public worship services, one should consider objectively whether he can read competently. He should be able to read with enough skill that he does not distract the audience from attending to the content of the scriptures being read. If one does not read well, he should not give up, but rather practice and improve.

When reading publicly, speak up so the audience will be able to hear what is read. Announce the scripture loudly. Enunciate the words and read with proper emphasis. Your interest in the text will help generate a corresponding interest in the audience. To eliminate mistakes in advance and to develop confidence, practice reading in front of a mirror or before family and friends.

Make all introductory remarks about the reading brief and to the point. Avoid editorializing on the text. Remember, the object is to have the word be the center of attention, not the reader.

The scripture reading can be a confidence building experience for the reader. It is often one of the first things done in public worship by one young in the faith. But more importantly, it can greatly enhance the worship service when done in a dignified manner. Do not take it lightly; honor God and His word by the service you give.

II. LEADING THE SINGING

It's been said: "A good song leader can make a bad preacher sound better, but a bad song leader can make the best preacher sound bad." The song leading may be the most important role in ensuring the proper spirit in our worship. He can either lead the congregation into worship that is wearying, or put them in mind to be excited about worshipping the Lord.

Paul states that singing is designed to teach and admonish one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Every member is to sing! All know that it is a sin to introduce an instrument of music into worship because it is a violation of scripture; yet, many fail to sing, which is also a violation of scripture... subtracting from God's commands. Everyone is commanded to sing. Some try to be excused on the grounds that they do not sound good. Yet, God did not say that only the trained or good sounding voices are to sing. All are to sing, and that means all the members.

The purpose of singing is two-fold. By it, Christians worship God and edify each other. Ken Green adds that "we must accept the fact that we are not going to have music that will meet professional standards. ...Neither is congregational singing going to sound like a well balanced and polished denominational choir. ...I feel that we should realize that like other elements of scriptural worship, our singing will never have a great appeal to those who demand worldly standards. This is not to say that most of us cannot vastly improve." (IN HIS SERVICE, p 25)

Some congregations plan special classes on singing and song leading. There are several faithful men across the country who are well qualified to conduct such classes. Local churches would do well to include this in their plans for strengthening the church (in addition to the regular gospel meeting).

In every way, the song leader should put forth every effort to take responsibility for his role. Knowledge of the congregation and the songs they know will go a long way in providing a service that benefits all. Too often songs are picked at the last moment and not practiced at home. This can lead to a mix up of picking songs that have similar titles, but different tunes. Nothing causes a congregation to lose respect for a song leader more quickly than the thought that he doesn't know what he's doing. The song leader should ask himself: Is the congregation familiar with this song? Am I comfortable singing it? Is it appropriate for the time of services? These questions enable the song leader to choose appropriate songs.

Helpful Suggestions For Song Leaders

1) Try to use an old, well-known song for the first song. If the church has to struggle through the first song, it makes for an uncomfortable atmosphere. The entire song service will be better if the congregation is allowed to limber up and open up their lungs on the first song. In singing an old song first, the church can immediately get into the spirit of the worship.

2) Never sing an unknown song as an invitation song. Also stay away from invitation songs that are too long or ones that are hard to sing with many parts. Start the

invitation song immediately when the invitation is extended. A delay allows the urgency of the call to obey to die.

3) Announce the song by title and number. Example: "Please turn to number One Forty Five, Jesus Paid It All. Number One-Four-Five." Give a little time between songs. Be sure everyone is ready to start with the leader.

4) The song leader should sing as loud and strong as he can. His purpose is to lead (guide) the song, not just to start it.

5) Use familiar songs during gospel meetings. A special effort to win souls is no time to learn or practice a new song. Use good judgment in the selection of songs with base or alto leads.

6) Watch the clock and choose stanzas accordingly. You may wish some times to eliminate a few verses of a song. Don't cut too much into the "preaching" time.

7) The opposite of number 6 above: do not get into the habit of singing only verses one, three, and five of a five verse song. Read the verses ahead of time and determine how appropriate they are.

8) Is the song itself appropriate? Just because it is in a song book does not mean that it conforms to "*psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...*"

Again, these are suggestions that are designed to help. Hopefully, they will enhance one's ability to lead and to sing songs that are offered up as pleasing to our Lord. (Some suggestions were adapted from "Suggestions to Song Leaders" by Raymond Harris, pages 26-27, and from "In His Service" by Kenneth Green)

III. TEACHING A BIBLE CLASS

The purpose of a Bible class necessarily becomes the purpose of the Bible teacher, to teach the Bible. When you are called upon to teach a Bible class, you are being given an opportunity to have a part in leading souls to learn and do the will of God! No greater opportunity could be desired or expected.

One who may never expect to stand before a large audience and preach from the pulpit can do a wonderful work within the walls of a classroom teaching the Bible to a smaller group.

Using The Proper Method Of Teaching

The method will vary in different groups. The aim should be the same in every class, that is, to teach the pupils the truth and to guide them into a life of Christian service. The method used by the teacher should be the one which will best achieve this aim. The method must be adapted to the age, ability and needs of the pupil. Also, another factor in determining the method to be used is the teacher's own natural ability. Some teachers can use one method better than others.

Methods of Teaching

1. The recitation method. By a systematic use of questions, the teacher leads the students into expressing themselves. They recite what they know about the lesson. This method has certain advantages: (1) The teacher is able to learn whether the pupils are grasping the lesson materials, (2) It encourages class participation and individual development, (3) It helps the teacher to know of erroneous impressions in the minds of the students that he may seek to correct them. However, the danger of the pupils' relying upon memorized answers must be guarded against. Also there is the danger of allowing one or two less timid pupils to monopolize the time and give most of the answers.

2. The drill. This is an excellent method for children. Drill them in fundamental facts about the Bible and its contents.

3. The conversational method, or class discussion. Great good may come from the use of this method by the skillful teacher. When another method is being used, it may be good to have a short period of class discussion near the close of each session of the class. The teacher must control the discussion to keep it from drifting away from the subject. There is the danger of lingering too long on one thought or of spending too much time in the discussion of minor details. The discussion should not be allowed to descend into an endless and aimless wrangle between two or three members of the class.

4. The lecture method. The teacher does most of the talking. This method is more effective in adult classes than in classes of the young. Where the lecture method is used it is well to close the session with a thought provoking question or two to be discussed by the class or to ask questions from the class to be openly discussed.

Preparing The Lesson

The procedure in preparing the lesson and the amount of time spent in preparation must be determined by the nature of the subject and materials, the age and ability of the class, and the method being used.

In addition to his Bible, the teacher should have access to a good dictionary, a Bible dictionary, a good concordance, maps, and a reliable commentary or two.

General Suggestions

1. Preparation should begin well in advance. Spend a few minutes each day for a week if possible.

2. First get your subject clearly fixed in your mind; then let your subject "get" you!

3. Read the text and the context carefully. Get a thorough understanding of the setting and background of the text.

4. Try to think of questions that some in the class are apt to ask and seek to be prepared to answer them.

5. Make a list of the chief points in the lesson. Plan to emphasize these in your discussion.

6. Each time you sit down to study your lesson, begin that period of study with prayer. Go before the class in a prayerful attitude.

7. Remember that the salvation of some soul may depend up, how well you are prepared to teach the lesson when you stand before the class.

Lesson Nine

The Lord's Supper is a solemn occasion to remember the death of our Lord and the great sacrifice He made for all on Calvary. It ought to be observed with the seriousness and dignity that befits the occasion. I do not imply that the partaking of the Lord's Supper is more important than any other act of worship. They are all equally important. The Christian is to participate in each activity in spirit and in truth (Jno. 4:24). The death of Christ was a propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for us, that God might be able to forgive sins and put one into a covenant relationship with Him. No other act except the death of the sinless Son of God on the cross could accomplish this.

The Purpose Of The Lord's Supper

The apostle Paul states that the purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember His death. In 1Corinthians 11:25-26. *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes"* (NKJV). In verse 25, the Lord's Supper is a remembrance, a memorial of the Lord's sacrifice of Himself for sinners. Man builds memorials and monuments of stainless steel, granite or marble... materials he hopes will endure. The Son of God built a memorial that has lasted 2000 years, assembled each week from perishable elements. Unleavened bread and grape juice are not enduring materials. They will mold and become stale. Yet these very elements, prepared weekly by faithful hands, become by faith the body and blood of the Lord in the communion service every first day of the week. The Lord's Supper is a lasting memorial for the purpose of observing (looking back on) the Lord's death on Calvary, and faithful Christians will continue to partake of it *"until He comes."*

The Frequency Of Observing The Lord's Supper

The "when" of partaking the Lord's Supper is found by example of what the early church did. *"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight"* (Acts 20:7). There are no other examples of the early church partaking of the Lord's supper on any other day of the week. Those who claim they can do so need to cite authority from Scripture. Divine silence eliminates every day but the first day of the week.

Also, the Lord's Supper is a congregational function, rather than an individual one. It is something done *"when the disciples came together."* This eliminates carrying the communion to shut-ins in hospitals, and private or nursing homes. If one cannot assemble, he or she is excused from partaking. One can do many things individually; he can sing and pray, study and teach others. But the Lord's Supper (and the giving of one's means) is a congregational function or activity. Everyone should be dedicated to observe the Lord's supper with other disciples, upon the first day of the week.

The Manner Of Observing The Lord's Supper

The manner in which a Christian observes the Lord's Supper should be the attitude he or she would display in engaging in any act of divine worship. The apostle Paul says that Christians can control their thinking (Phil. 4:8); so, as they observe the Lord's supper each needs to concentrate on Jesus' death on Calvary as well as the suffering and anguish He went through in order to secure salvation. Try to block out external distractions that one may meditate on the greatest sacrifice the world has ever

known. A few well chosen remarks by the one presiding at the table will help each disciple to meditate on Calvary.

Duties Of One Presiding At The Communion Service

The brother who presides at the serving of the Lord's Supper can do a great deal to make the service meaningful to the participants. This should involve something more than simply reading Matthew 26:26-29 or Luke 22:17-20 where Jesus instituted the Supper. While this is certainly acceptable, yet it tells little about why He was instituting the Supper. There are many passages that dwell on His suffering and death that would be more appropriate for the communion service. Some of these would be: Psalm 22; Heb. 2:9-17, 7:22-27, 9:24-28; 1Peter 1:18-21, 2:21-25. The one in charge, or "presiding" at the service should be neatly dressed and well prepared to lead the congregation in a meaningful participation of the Lord's Supper.

Duties Of Those Who Serve The Communion

Those who serve the congregation are vital to an orderly and meaningful communion service. They should be neatly dressed in their best attire. A tee shirt and jeans are not appropriate clothing in which to appear before the congregation (unless that is all one has to wear). We are in the spiritual presence of the Son of God, not attending a football game. Neat, clean clothing is essential. The brethren serving should strive to serve the communion in an orderly manner, seeing that no one is overlooked. Those serving should not partake of the communion first, but serve themselves last at the rear of the auditorium or where it has been decided in advance. Good judgment and common sense should prevail. The congregation is to be served first and the servers eat the communion last.

Prayers To Be Offered For The Lord's Supper

It is necessary to say few words regarding the prayers offered at the table for the bread and the fruit of the vine. Too often a brother will pray for many other things, and occasionally forget to give thanks for the elements involved. The observance of the Lord's Supper is not the time to ask for forgiveness of sins, or to pray for the sick. This should be handled in the opening prayer. The prayers at the Lord's table should be brief and to the point. Here are a few examples. "Holy Father, we thank thee in the name of Jesus Christ, for this bread, the body of our Lord who suffered for us on Calvary. Amen." "Holy Father, we thank thee for this bread emblematic of the body of Jesus, who died to make our salvation possible. We are grateful in his name. Amen," "Our Father, we thank thee for this bread and the great sacrifice made for us on Calvary, in Christ' name. Amen." "Heavenly Father, accept our thanks for this cup, the blood of Jesus which was shed for the remission of sins. In his name. Amen." "Holy Father, accept our thanks for this cup, and all that it means to thy people this day. In the name of Jesus. Amen." "Our Father in heaven; we thank thee for this cup, the fruit of the vine, the blood shed by thy Son. In Jesus' name. Amen." (From "The Lord's Supper, Prayers, Thanksgivings," By C. R. Nichol, 1957).

One can see that these prayers are very brief and to the point. They are not filled with request for healing for the sick, or safe travel, or forgiveness of sins, etc. The prayers offered at the Lord's Table should keep the congregation's thinking focused on Calvary, and what was accomplished by Jesus on our behalf. The brethren who pray and serve the communion service are essential to making the service meaningful to each disciple. Do not consider this a "little duty" or chore to be carried out. Faithful

service here is extremely important to the proper partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.

The taking up of the contribution on the first day of the week is one of those activities often thought to be purely physical or mechanical in nature, just an item that needs to be taken care of. But like all acts of worship, the contribution involves the heart of the worshipper. *"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Cor. 9:7).

The Contribution

The contribution should be taken up with the same attention given to the distribution of the Lord's Supper. It can be taken up right after the observance of the Lord's Supper, while the men are already at the front, and while the congregation is filled with grateful thoughts for the Lord's sacrifice. However, many congregations make an effort to separate the contribution from the Lord's Supper by a song to show that they are distinct from one another. Use good judgment and common sense in deciding what would be expedient for the congregation.

The free-will offering of saints on the first day of the week is the only scripturally authorized time that the church can take up a collection. The church cannot conduct raffles, bake sales, chicken dinners, etc. as a way to raise funds for the work of the church. The church cannot buy, sell, or rent real estate, or engage in any other business venture to raise money.

Sometimes an objection is raised that the church cannot accept any interest on a savings account because it is not posted on the first day of the week. The church can pay interest on a building loan for the use of money it borrows. By the same logic it can accept interest on its money while it is in the bank, as long as this is only incidental, and the money is not "invested" for the express purpose of making more. Church treasuries are not going to heaven. They need to be spent on the Lord's work here on earth. It is proper to "save" funds for a while in a bank account in order to build a meeting house, or to await opportunities in evangelism. Just keep in mind what the purpose of these funds are and what they are to be used for; to spread the borders of God's kingdom.

Often, the one presiding at the collection will offer a brief prayer concerning the giving. Some brethren don't think this is necessary, and some don't think it is proper. Anything one can scripturally do, he can pray about. Personally, I prefer a prayer before the collection, but it can certainly be taken up without one.

Lesson Ten

I. ELDERS OF THE CHURCH

There is a great need for capable men to serve as elders of the churches of the Lord throughout the world. There are two reasons for the shortage of qualified men to be elders of the church: (1) Few men in the church apply themselves in study of the Bible and diligent Christian living to the extent of acquiring the necessary spiritual development to be elders of the church, (2) Few churches are giving the proper attention to training and encouraging men to become qualified for the work of elders. The greatest work in the church is that of "overseeing the flock." Not only those congregations which do not have elders should provide training classes for the men looking forward to their development so they may be prepared to serve as elders some day if called upon to do so, but churches which have faithful elders should look to the future by training the younger men so that, as they grow older and the circumstances demand it, they may be ready for the greatest responsibility that can be assumed by a man in the church of our Lord. Elders who show a lack of interest in training the men under their oversight are shirking one of the most important duties they have to perform.

This lesson is not intended to be an extensive study of this important matter, but will only serve as a "starter" in the right direction focusing attention upon the duties and qualifications of elders. The director of the class may see fit to spend a number of study periods on this subject. That you may be prepared for the points suggested below, read carefully 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1:5-12.

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

1. Good Character. They must be spiritually minded men who are honest and sincere. They are to be kind and generous, even tempered, able to practice self-control. They are not to be "money crazy." They must have the confidence and respect of the public.

2. Sound in the Faith. They must know the truth of God and love it. They must not only be men of conviction, but they must have the courage to stand for the right. They must love the glory that is of God more than the praise of men. They must be able to expose false teachers who may slip in among the flock endangering the souls of those who are committed to their care.

3. The Right Kind of Home Life. A man who is not respected in his own home as the one who has the oversight cannot expect the church to respect him in this capacity. His wife must be a faithful Christian, not a gossip. One who is sympathetic with him in his responsibilities. His children are to be in subjection to him and faithful to the Lord.

4. The balance of the qualifications are to be carefully applied (Titus 1:5-9; 1Tim. 3:1-7).

III. DUTIES OF ELDERS (I Peter 5:1-4)

They should maintain the right attitude toward their work.

1. "Not of constraint." Not reluctantly, but of a willing mind; anxious to serve; ready always to do the will of God.

2. "Nor yet for filthy lucre." In the earlier days of the church, elders were often supported by the church while they devoted their full time to the church. They are warned not to serve for the sake of the money involved. They were to be sincere in their service.

3. "Neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you." Not exercising authority in a high-handed, tyrannical, dictatorial fashion. But, with a desire to do the will of God and to promote the good of the cause of Christ.

Duties Enjoined:

1. "Take heed to yourselves" (Acts 20:28). This principle applies to all Christians and is essential if we are to have the proper influence over others. He who is to "take heed to the flock" must first take heed to himself.

2. "Feed the church of God." Elders must be "apt to teach." It is not necessary that they do all of the teaching, but all teaching must be under their oversight. They should see that the necessary "feeding times" are arranged to care for the needs of the whole flock. They should make it their business to know the life, the teaching and the attitude of each teacher used.

3. "Tend the Flock of God (1Pet- 5:2). Guard it from false teachers, hobbyists and trouble makers. They should "admonish the disorderly; encourage the faint- hearted; support the weak."

IV. ELDER, PRESBYTER, BISHOP, PASTOR, SHEPHERD

The above words are used in the New Testament with reference to the same men in the church. A study of these terms will help us to appreciate the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of the men who are to oversee the local church.

1. Elder (Acts 14:23; 1Tim. 5:1, 17; Titus 1:5; 1Pet. 5:1). This word is from the Greek word "presbuteros." In 1Tim. 4:14, Paul speaks of the "presbytery," a term that has to do with age. Not necessarily an old man, but an older man. One who is old enough to have stability of character and maturity of judgment.

2. Bishop (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:7; 1Tim 4:1; Phil. 1:1). From the Greek "episcopos" - an overseer. We often hear it said that the elders are to oversee the "work of the church." This statement is only partially true. They are to oversee the church! They are more than mere business managers for the church. They are to watch in behalf of the souls that are committed to their care

3. Pastor, shepherd (1Pet. 2:25; 5:2; Eph. 4:11). The elders are to lead, feed, protect, comfort, and encourage the flock.

Lesson Eleven

I. DEACONS (1Tim. 3:8-13)

Little is given in the New Testament as to the nature of the work of deacons. There are three sources from which we may reach conclusions as to their work.

1. Their qualifications as listed in 1Tim. 3:8-13. Let the students read and study this passage carefully. The qualifications for deacons are similar to those for elders. The chief difference is that elders are to be "apt to teach." The men who are asked to serve as deacons must be men whose faithfulness and character have been proven. They must be men worthy of special responsibility.

2. The meaning of the Greek word rendered "deacons," means to serve, to minister, to help.

3. The application of the same word to the seven men appointed to look after the Grecian widows (Acts 6:1-6). It is not known that these men were formerly recognized as deacons, and yet the work must have been similar to that to be done by deacons since the same Greek word is used with reference to their work.

From the foregoing, we conclude that deacons are to serve under the oversight of the elders as their helpers. It seems that their special duties have to do with the temporal affairs connected with the activities of the church. There is nothing in the New Testament to justify the practice of deacons having the same voice in the decisions that are made in the oversight of the church as the elders. Their work is to be planned and overseen by the elders.

II. SUGGESTED DUTIES FOR DEACONS

The following suggestions as to work that should be done by the deacons are based upon the conclusions expressed above:

1. Supervision of the maintenance of the buildings and the grounds. Keeping them clean and in a state of repair.
2. Seating the audience; ventilating the building, etc.
3. Supervise the counting of the money.
4. See that the baptistery is kept filled and in order at all time. Look after the clothing before and after baptisms.
5. Handle the work of caring for the poor under the oversight of the elders.
6. It is good for elders to assign special and regular duties to the different deacons. Deacons might suggest tasks for themselves the elders.

III. BUSINESS MEETINGS

At times, business meetings are conducted in a haphazard fashion. The scripture says that things are to be done "decently and in order." This lesson will not be filled with parliamentary procedures, but rather godly men should let common sense and brotherly courtesies prevail in the business meeting.

It certainly would be appropriate to begin the meeting with a brief prayer. The usual procedure then would be the presentation of the financial report by the treasurer of the congregation or else one designated by him to present the report. This should include the contributions for the previous month, the moneys expended, and the present balance in the treasury. Little if any future work can be planned without knowledge of the funds available to plan the work.

One designated should take minutes of the business meeting, and after the financial report, the minutes of the previous meeting should be read. This will call

attention to any items left over from the last meeting that still need attention. After dispensing with "old business," the meeting can proceed on to "new business."

New Business might include a variety of items to be considered in the fields of evangelism, edification, and benevolence. Evangelism may include local advertising, bulletins and tracts, Bible correspondence courses, radio and TV ads or programs, the support of gospel preaching, both local and in other places, upcoming vacation Bible schools, gospel meetings, etc. Edification may include materials and special classes for the ladies or other groups, and any variety of things that may build up or strengthen the local church. Benevolence would include needy members of the local congregation, or the needs of Christians in other areas that local brethren have become aware of.

These instructions are designed to help congregations that do not have elders to conduct orderly business meetings. If the church has elders, they can take charge of the meetings. Without elders, it is necessary to build a consensus for decisions to carry out the work of the church. It is not right to let one negative brother by his objections, prevent any decision from being made. This would be "one man rule" in the negative sense. On the other hand, be sure to hear brethren out who have objections to a decision. They may be valid. Have all aspects and consequences of the decision been carefully thought out? Are the goals sought scriptural in all regards?

Try to get every brother in the meeting to contribute his thoughts. Some are shy about speaking up. The one conducting the meeting should make a point of asking for their opinions or thoughts on the subject under discussion. It is needful to hear from everyone in order to build a working consensus to reach a decision that the church can carry out without any future backlash or reproach over the work.

It is appropriate and needful to have an organized agenda for the meeting. In this way, the meeting can be focused on the purpose and outcome desired in the meeting. It is also good to have a beginning and ending time in order to keep things moving along toward the desired goals. Otherwise, it is too easy to get bogged down in talking about what the church did ten years ago, that did not work, or that produced glorious results. Either way, it is past history, and the work of the church must go forward to accomplish its goals in the future.

It may be necessary to make some assignments to a brother or brethren to look into a need and report back at the next meeting, or to do a work assigned and report on its completion at a future meeting. Try to encourage participation by everyone in the meeting. The church needs the zeal, enthusiasm, and new ideas of the young men, and it also needs the maturity, sound judgment, and wise counsel of older brethren.

The role of the chairman conducting the meeting should be to:

1. Provide the agenda
2. Keep the focus
3. Encourage participation
4. Protect gospel truths while seeking new ideas
5. Keep the meeting well paced
6. Above all, honor and glorify God

Lesson Twelve

I. PREPARATION FOR PREACHING

The man who wishes to develop himself in the work of teaching Bible classes and making talks on the Scriptures will do well to invest a few dollars in good books. The best way for the average man to build a good library, whether it be large or small, is to purchase one or two books at a time. If one waits until he thinks he is in a position to buy a large number of books before purchasing the ones he needs, the chances are he will never buy them. By purchasing one or two books each month, it will not take long to have your book shelves filled with useful works in preparing your lessons. Listed below are only a few of the hundreds of good books that you might find helpful.

II. TRAINING SUGGESTIONS FOR PREACHERS

Personal Study:

1. Regardless of the study done to prepare sermons and class material, one will need to study to develop character, integrity, and spiritual mindedness. Study for sermons, etc. is done to answer error and promote truth. Personal study is done to develop one's self.

2. Set up a specific time for DAILY Bible study and document it until the habit is firmly set. (document by making notes, outlines, diary, or tape summary)

3. Vary the topics of personal study. Change the subject at least once per week; return to it at a later time in order to prevent burnout. A variety of studies will round out one's knowledge as well as keep interest in bible study fresh.

Sermon Development:

1. Full-time evangelists should create at least one new sermon per week. It is acceptable to use a old lesson as long as one studies it to the point that it becomes imperative to preach it. Part time preachers should make at least two new sermons per month.

2. It is unacceptable to use another person's sermon without permission, and without adapting it to the needs of the congregation to which it is presented. It is necessary to use your own illustrations and style of presentation.

3. Vary the topics in order to prevent getting into a rut. Series sermons are acceptable only in moderation, with specific limited time span, and only after being well researched. Suggested styles: exegesis, persuasive (negative or positive), informative (topical), comparison/contrast, historical, doctrinal.

4. Develop both a draft and finalized outline. Where possible, share with mentor for constructive critique.

5. Present new lessons within a reasonable time after development. Interest and zeal for topic tends to dwindle over time due to interest in other subjects.

6. Create a ritual or habit in order to prepare to preach the sermon. (Example: rise an hour early, sit alone with the outline, Bible, and a cup of coffee; sit and review your notes, pray and meditate for an hour)

Writing:

1. A full-time evangelist should write a minimum of two articles per month. Part time preachers should write at least one.

2. Length of article should be between five hundred to one thousand words. Never copy another writer's words or style without giving credit.

3. Diversify topics just as with sermons.
4. Write at the reading level of your projected readership.
5. Vary your readership; write for bulletins, magazines, computer bulletin boards, and in your own personal journal.

III. COUNSEL OFFERED TO MY FELLOW SERVANTS OF CHRIST

Preach for love's sake. Become a servant of Jesus Christ because you love Him and the sacrifice He made that the world might be saved. Although it is a joy to be saved ourselves, our love for Christ compels us to make His sacrifice mean more by carrying news of it to more and more people. When I survey the wondrous cross, I see the pain twisted visage of the Savior looking back in love. How can I respond to that love other than to get other people to gaze at the cross with me?

Become a preacher because you love God and His word. I am proud of my Dad, and I tell others about him; but more than this, I am honored to be called a child of the heavenly Father, and I long to share this with the world. Our Father has spoken to us in words more profound than this world can bear. How can we do otherwise than love this word and dive deep into its wisdom and intricacies?

Be a preacher because you love souls. Every soul is precious to God. What is puzzling to us is why God values souls so much. God's love for the soul extends beyond the mere fact that each is unique; it is more than just the fact that the soul is eternal. God loves souls regardless of how righteous they may or may not be. There is some intrinsic value in every soul, some quality and goodness that if cultivated will transform a life and could change the world. The nearly limitless potential for good in each soul is what makes them so precious. Preacher, learn to see this in all of humankind, Christian and sinner alike.

Be a preacher because you love yourself. Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is a challenge that presses and lifts a man to become the best he can be. Preaching renders a tremendous sense of fulfillment that makes rising each day and going to bed each night a meaningful experience. Preaching fills many needs within the Christian man that often go unsated in other pursuits in life. As an evangelist, one has increased opportunity to study God's word, increased opportunity to visit the physically and spiritually ill, increased opportunity to carry the message of peace and truth to the lost, and increased opportunity to have fellowship with the saved. Without dismissing the hardships that come with being a servant of Christ, being a preacher has become my way of treating myself to a happy life.

Preach for the right reason... because you love the Lord, the Father, the truth, and the souls of men.

Some wrong reasons for preaching:

1. Because I want to "straighten out" my brethren.
2. Because I want to "slam-dunk" false teachers.
3. Because I want to make a living.
4. Because someone else wants me to be a preacher.
5. Because I enjoy the public attention. (PRB)

Lesson 13

General Instructions for Improving Our Leadership in Worship Services

I. Public Leadership:

(Announcements, Remarks at Lord's Table, Invitation, Closing Comments, Scripture Reading)

1. Five critical elements of preparation: organize and assemble your material at home, practice at home, cultivate confidence from the first two, remember that the audience is your friend, just do it

2. Three parts of communication: words, tone of voice, body language

3. How to avoid being a distraction

4. How to avoid a monotone: The Twentieth Century Dictionary defines "monotone" as "a sameness of sound, or the utterance of successive syllables in one unvaried key, without inflection or cadence." Nothing is more distracting when listening to a reader or a speaker than for him to "grind" along in the same tone with no rising or falling of the voice on key words and at the end of a sentence.

a. Before attempting to read or speak, become thoroughly acquainted with the thoughts you are to present. Form a mental picture of the ideas. Remember, you cannot give to others that which you do not have. It is impossible to present with clearness ideas and thoughts to others which you do not have clearly fixed in your own mind.

b. "Feel" your thoughts. If you are to present a talk in which you wish to convince your audience that a certain proposition is right, you must first be thoroughly convinced within your own mind that the proposition is true.

c. Be yourself. Being yourself includes giving way to your own frame of mind while speaking. Do not imitate someone else.

d. Practice. Just as stage fright and other hindrances can be conquered by practice, so it is with learning how to handle the voice properly.

5. Posture and appearance:

Such questions as "How should I stand?", "What shall do with my hands?", "Should I move around or stand still?" often give the inexperienced speaker great concern.

a. Try to be as natural as possible in the way you handle yourself on the platform, yet never allow your "naturalness" to reach the point of carelessness.

b. As a general practice, one should stand erect, holding his head up enough to be able to look at his audience so as to keep his contact with the hearers while, at the same time, he should avoid "looking down his nose" at his audience. The position of the body should be changed enough to avoid the appearance of stiffness. If speaking behind a stand, it is well to hold to it occasionally, but NEVER lie down on it! The speaker should be enough at ease to move his feet at times, even taking a few steps in one direction or the other. However, not many speakers can hold the attention of the audience while they pace back and forth constantly.

c. One thing that is almost certain to divide the attention of the audience between the speaker and his actions is for him to constantly twirl his glasses, play with his handkerchief, or pass a pointer from one hand to the other, etc.

d. The speaker should cultivate the practice of handling himself in such a way as to help emphasize his thoughts rather than to detract from them. This is something else that must come with practice. Learn to think on your feet. This will help you to be more at ease as you assume the position on the platform.

6. When it is your turn to speak, walk to the platform briskly with the appearance of alertness and purpose. Do not run, but do not drag your feet timidly. Step with determination. As you take your position, take a deep breath. This will serve to relax your muscles and add force to your first statements. As you wait for attention, look your audience over. This will help you to command attention, and it will give you the feeling that while you are addressing the audience, you are master of the situation.

7. Speak so as to be heard by all who have come to worship God (the microphone is your friend)

II. Announcements:

1. Arrive for services early enough to collect all necessary information; check News & Notes section of bulletin.
2. Organize information in the following format:
 - a. Greeting and welcome
 - b. Listing of the sick
 - c. Listing of the absent for work or travel
 - d. Listing of activities... special classes, meetings, etc.
 - e. Order of services
 - f. Introduce the song leader and announce the first song
3. Remember: you are the first person the audience will see in the pulpit in any given service. Your manner can set the tone for the rest of the services. If you cannot be cheerful, ask someone else to take your place.

III. Closing Comments:

1. Do not repeat the announcements unless absolutely necessary.
2. Welcome visitors to return; announce next service time.
3. Call on someone for prayer.
4. Closing comments should never take more than 1 to 2 minutes

IV. Scripture Reading:

1. Get scripture to be read from scheduler well in advance of services and read through it carefully. Practice reading it aloud if necessary, and consult a Bible dictionary for the pronunciation of difficult words.
2. When it is time to read, move briskly into position and announce the location of the reading in a loud, clear voice. Repeat the text a second time. In one or two sentences, give a summary of the text before you begin reading.
3. Read loudly and clearly, placing emphasis where necessary. Avoid using a monotone as well as any other tones or gestures that draw attention away from the scripture.

V. Serving at the Lord's Table:

1. When serving at the table, stand at parade rest (more or less). Gaze forward without staring at any one individual.
2. Do not put your hands in your pockets, move around, or do anything else that will draw attention to yourself.
3. When serving the congregation, stand attentively and quietly at the end of the row without staring at the individuals who are partaking. Be alert to your partner and coordinate your efforts smoothly. Avoid confusion. Be concerned to see that everyone gets served.

VI. Presiding at the Lord's Table:

1. Plan what you are going to say and do before ever getting up to the table. Review the steps you will go through at the table in your mind so that there will be no confusion at the table.

2. When making remarks at the table, speak as to be heard in the back of the room. Prepare your remarks in advance. Look for things to say that are fresh. Because of the nature of this part of our service, it is too easy to fall into routine. Do not make lengthy remarks or readings.

3. Handle the trays with deliberation so as not to drop or spill them. Regulate your words and movements with solemn dignity.

4. Identify each part of the service without excessive detail or repetitiveness.

5. Remember that observing the Lord's Supper in memory of Christ's passion and death is perhaps the most solemn activity we will engage in during our life on earth. Never allow it to become casual or routine.

6. Remember when serving the congregation in any of these capacities that you are a servant in a leadership position. Keep the humble mind of a servant while discharging the responsibilities of a leader.

7. Remember to give the Lord and your fellow Christians your best. Do NOT prepare at the last minute, nor treat your duty casually, nor serve carelessly. Every man between the ages of 18 and 88 can benefit by practice, preparation, and pressure. From the opening "welcome" to the final "amen," every work in worship services is important.

8. Remember, your service and leadership in worship is not about you. It is about God and those who have come to worship Him. There is little room for individualism or self-promotion; a man who likes attention should not be used in worship. If you are too timid to speak up, perhaps you should seek another area of service than leadership.

VII. Public Prayer:

Prayer is important and yet in our assemblies for worship we often treat it as though it were "a necessary evil." The one who leads the prayer may mumble so that he can be heard only a few feet away. Sometimes the only way the audience knows that the prayer has been finished is by the rustling of the audience as the people gradually "catch on" that the brother has finished. In other cases, the prayer may be so poorly worded that it is difficult for the hearers to comprehend it and follow the leader. On other occasions the wording of the prayer may be so inappropriate as to miss the mark altogether.

It is not the intention of the author to be critical of those who do their best with sincerity of heart to lead an audience in prayer. However, there are a number of "little things" that need to be watched. With a little thought and effort, the leader can help to draw the worshippers closer to God by the way he directs their minds in prayer. The author assumes that those who are engaged in this course of study understand that, for any prayer to be acceptable to God, it must be from a sincere heart and must be within Scriptural limits. This discussion has to do, primarily, with the oral part of the prayer. When a man attempts to lead a congregation of worshippers in prayer, he is definitely under obligation to proceed in such a way that the congregation can be led by him.

Instructions:

1. Do not pray too long to impress others. Some of the most impressive prayers in the Bible are short. Your ability to lead the minds of all in the audience is limited to a few minutes. It is not necessary to go into a lot of details and explanations in your prayer.

2. Speak out with enough volume to be heard by the person who is the greatest distance from you in the building. Remember, **if the audience can't hear what you say,**

you are not leading the people in prayer. Use the microphone so that everyone can participate in the worship services. It must be understood that the right of the elderly and hard of hearing to hear the prayers outweighs your preference to avoid the microphone.

3. Try to avoid repeating certain words or expressions over and over in your prayer. Some who lead in prayer fall into the practice of beginning or ending every statement with the same expression. This makes it more difficult for the audience to concentrate on what you are saying.

4. An orderly and simple presentation of the things that are in our hearts may be cultivated by keeping in mind what prayer is. It is simply talking to God. This talk to God should consist of the following elements: praise, thanksgiving, confession of sins, petitions for ourselves and others.

5. Prayer should not be used by the leader as a means of "getting" someone in the audience "told" on some point. Preaching should be done in sermons and not in the prayer. So, do not preach a sermon on baptism, the evils of denominationalism, the importance attending worship, or concerns you may have with other members morals or devotion, etc., in your prayer. Remember that you are praying to God WITH the audience instead of praying TO the audience.

6. Make the prayer appropriate to its purpose. A prayer before class should contain a petition for wisdom, open minds and open hearts. A prayer at the Lord's Table should focus on the supper, not the "poor and needy" or the government, etc. A closing prayer should do just that: thank God for the opportunity to worship and for safe passage homeward. It is not necessary or appropriate to repeat all of the things from the prayer during worship in the closing prayer.

7. We need to be careful of repetition and clichés in our prayers (Matt. 6:7). Not all repetition is bad. Jesus prayed the same prayer with the same words three times in the Garden. But repetition can become vain and useless and hinder our prayers. We need to be careful lest we use empty phrases and meaningless words just to "stretch out" a prayer to the proper length. Likewise, there are clichés that brethren have used so often in their prayers that they have virtually lost all meaning: "He who came to this low land of sin and sorrow" -- "those who are sick of this congregation" -- "bring us back at the next appointed time" -- "give the speaker a ready recollection" or "guideguardanddirectus" and a host of others. While such phrases may certainly convey scriptural thought and may be offered with sincerity, I am afraid that sometimes they simply reflect a lack of initiative. Rather than expend the effort to think of fresh ways to convey to the Father the intents of our heart, we allow ourselves to get in a rut and repeat the same tired phrases over and over. Prayer, as with all worship, needs to be fresh and edifying, not routine and repetitive.

Conclusion:

Devout Christians desire to grow; it is an integral part of their nature. Likewise, faithful men who serve the local church by leading in worship services desire to grow and improve in their public work. The apostle Paul told Timothy to study the word and to use his abilities "that your progress may be evident to all" (1Tim. 4:13-15). Furthermore, he tells Timothy to commit the principles of the gospel to trustworthy men "who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Five times in the letter to Titus, Paul tells his fellow evangelist to teach disciples to be prepared to do good works. Beyond all dispute, one must grow in ability to resist temptation, increase in knowledge of God's will, and multiply in good works. Why would one not want to grow in ability to lead others in worship services? As John Viscount Morley of Blackburn wrote: "It is not enough to do good; one must do it the right way."

WE HAVE BECOME STOIC

by Weldon Warnock

One of the chief characteristics of the ancient Stoics (Acts 17:18) was *ataraxia* which is a word meaning "freedom from emotions." The word, "Stoic," itself means "not easily excited; unmoved by joy or grief." The Stoics strove to master their feelings in order that they would not be affected by any event, even personal tragedies in their lives. They presumed that peace could only be realized by total indifference or apathy toward all things. Their personalities, therefore, were cold and lifeless.

In over-reacting to emotionalism, some of us have taken on the spirit of stoicism. This is obvious as reflected in the atmosphere of our worship in many places. In every act of worship there is a dispirited participation. No feeling is reflected! From beginning to end it is bland, stereotyped and formal, with the environment of a morgue. Worship should be a joyous occasion where the spirit is lifted up and the heart is satisfied. Like David, we should be able to say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1).

Look at the typical, lethargic church in the exercise of its worship. There is a call to order by the songleader announcing the number of a song. There is no introduction to worship, but simply, "number 200" ringing out through the auditorium. Again, you might hear, "number 2-0-0, number 200," as people begin to settle down.

Stoical Singing

The leader stands like a statue, head buried in the songbook, dragging along with the pitch an octave too high, and a song that has been worn out by over-exposure. The singing is atrocious! But they finally work their way through the first song and the second one goes about the same way, except this time the song may be offkey and way too low. After the singing of two songs (this has been the routine for 20 years), it is time to stand for prayer.

The third song has an "Amen" at the close of it, but no, you cannot sing that as it would show some emotion to say, "Amen," or it is too sectarian. I do not know what we are going to do with all of the "Amens" in the Bible. Well, anyway, the song is finished and the leader retreats to the back of the auditorium where he sits till the invitation hymn, and when that is ready, he makes his way up the aisle with a fifteen-second lull between the time the preacher stops and the song begins.

Brethren, songleaders can make or break a service. How rich and uplifting is the worship when there is good singing--songs that warm the heart and brighten our hope. We need to use the best we have and train those who are inexperienced. But for some reason brethren will put anybody up to lead singing, frequently dressed in untidy clothes, and we wonder why people are getting turned off and quitting the church.

In a gospel meeting, brethren feel compelled to use a different songleader each night, and some of them are not ready to conduct the singing. Brethren will send hundreds of miles for a preacher, spending 700 to 800 dollars for the meeting, and then greatly hinder it by not having the best man available to lead the singing. Preachers of years past brought songleaders with them. They had great singing. Some places would be wise in bringing in a songleader for gospel meetings and have a songfest each night for 25 or 30 minutes before preaching. What great meetings we would have if such were done.

Another thing, look at our faces when we sing. Some of us have a countenance that resembles a Missouri mule--long and forlorn. Certainly there are sad songs, but

many songs have a message of salvation and joy. Why cannot we reflect in our faces and actions such wonderful words? Is this another sign of stoicism?

Stoical Prayers

Sometimes prayers are uttered in rote--just empty sayings. Jesus had somewhat to say about vain repetition (Matt. 6:7). Spontaneity is lacking! The phrases used are the same expressions over and over. We need to ask, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1). The model prayer of Jesus (Matt. 6:9-15) serves as an excellent foundation and guideline for prayer. We all could profit by studying the prayers of Paul (Phil. 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12) and pray in like manner.

The brother leading the prayer should speak loudly enough to be heard by the entire assembly and when he finishes, there should be some "Amen's." Paul said an "Amen" is in order at the giving of thanks, providing we understand what the brother said (I Cor. 14:16). We generally understand what is spoken, but the "Amen's" are rather scarce. Most of the time there is just the "Amen" of the brother leading the prayer. Again, an indication of stoicism. We might ought to do like the black brother in a white congregation when he closed his prayer. He said, "Now, let us all say, 'Amen.'" There was an overwhelming response.

Stoical Observance of the Lord's Supper

In the observance of the Lord's Supper, nothing is said, whatsoever to focus our minds upon the suffering and death of our Lord. At a given moment in the worship, perhaps after the third song or after the invitation song, men come from all directions and line up at the table. A brother, without any explanation, begins giving thanks, and the bread is passed among the worshipers. The fruit of the vine is treated in the same manner. After the Lord's Supper is concluded, they grab the collection plates, also without explanation, and start down the aisles. By habit the members know what is happening in sequence, but the visitors learn as it takes place and are somewhat unprepared.

Brethren, the greatness of Jesus and His unspeakable love demonstrated at Calvary deserves more from us than a hurlyburly, frigid, and petrified appearance at the Lord's Table. How refreshing to hear a brother give a brief talk that shows a feeling of gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. Then, when the Supper is finished and the contribution is ready to be taken, someone can talk about the privilege of giving and what God has done for us in a material way.

Stoical Preaching

Preaching, with not a few, has become "talks." There is not much preaching to it. The audience is asleep in about five minutes from a monotone and maybe a topic that is as irrelevant as the Pony Express. Preachers need to put some punch, "fire" and enthusiasm in their sermons instead of trying to act like a Harvard theologian. We are preaching to common people with every day common problems, hence, we need to gear our preaching to their common needs, and preach with all the vim and vitality we can "muster-up."

Have you noticed how gospel preachers are introduced, anymore? It might go something like this: "After singing of this song, George will bring us the lesson." With such exuberant (?) introduction, dull singing, and perhaps a stereotyped prayer and ritualistic communion, the audience is practically comatose by the time the preacher is ready to preach. May I add, what has happened to the affectionate designation,

"brother?" Too, has the word, "sermon," become obsolete, or the expression, "preach to us," antiquated?

From the pulpit the preacher many times sees stone-faces, zombies, who sit emotionless. There is no response, no Amens, no nodding of heads, no expression of approval when the truth is preached. We have become too austere! Hearing Christ preached should excite us with jubilation and joy. It will show on those who are elated. It cannot be concealed.

Stoical Announcements

Finally, we do not want to overlook the announcements. They generally come at the end of the service. They are so abrupt without any continuity of worship. There is no mention how good it was to have been in the service, the blessings enjoyed, the sermon preached, etc., but far removed from the events that transpired, the brother starts with reading cold, hard facts. Warmth is missing.

The announcer proceeds to the sick and announces that "Bob Jones had surgery and is in room 240 at the local hospital." Brother Jones may be in critical condition, but there is no statement of concern, or request for prayers on his behalf. No feeling is expressed to his faithful family in the audience. This should not be. Some of us have gotten to the place where we cannot show emotions, shed tears of joy or sorrow and offer sympathy. Brethren, we MUST change!

On the other hand, thank God for vibrant churches and vigorous Christians who can sing "Sweet By and By" with tears of happiness, who pray with fervency, who are touched with gratitude, and express it, every time the Lord's Supper is eaten and who appreciate gospel preaching and show it.

Those who have drifted into lethargy and coldness need to be revived. Give us live, active, caring, Spirit-filled (Eph. 5:18) churches and Christians everywhere as we endeavor to serve the Lord in a world of sin.

(Weldon Warnock, Searching the Scriptures, October 1984, pgs 221-2)