

Preparing For Worship

Every Sunday morning I go through somewhat of a ritual at my house to get prepared for worship services. I wake up at 6:00 and look over my sermon outline. Then I take a shower, eat breakfast with my family, get dressed, brush my teeth, and out the door I go! I am sure most of you follow a similar routine. You may not wake up at 6:00 in the morning, and you may not be looking over a sermon outline while drinking your morning coffee, but I suspect many of the details are very similar.

It is very important to me that I do these things, in this order, every Sunday morning. Maybe I am being a little “OCD” about it, but if I fail to do these things I do not feel prepared to go to worship services.

It is important that we all show up on time, decently dressed, having practiced a little personal hygiene, and without our stomachs grumbling. We want to focus upon our worship without being a distraction to others. However, while we are getting ourselves ready physically we should also be getting ourselves ready spiritually.

There are probably some members who come to morning services on an empty stomach, but most of us feel it is important to eat something for breakfast. After all, our minds and bodies need energy — but so does our spirit. Do we spend some time on Sunday morning taking nourishment from God’s word (1 Peter 2:2)? Perhaps we do our daily Bible reading, look over our lesson for Bible class, or read scriptures that will go along with the morning’s sermon. Doing so will get our hearts and minds focused upon worship and will whet our appetite for more of God’s word.

It is important that we wash our bodies, but do we leave for worship with “dirty” souls? It is important that we spend time on Sunday morning in prayer unto God, asking Him, among other things, “to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We cannot acceptably approach God with unclean hearts, hands or lips (James 4:8; Isaiah 6:5).

Many of us feel the need to dress in a certain way for worship services. We were raised to wear our “Sunday best,” and simply would not feel right coming to worship God in anything else. The Bible admonishes us to dress ourselves spiritually. We are to put on the new man (Ephesians 4:24). We are to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-17). We are to be clothed with humility (1 Peter 5:5). We are to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and love (Colossians 3:12-14). In short, we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14).

Just before we go out the door we check ourselves in the mirror. Does everything look right (our hair, makeup, clothes, etc.)? How often do we stop and examine ourselves in light of God’s word to make sure everything is right with our heart? “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves ...” (2 Cor. 13:5).

While it is important that we see and acknowledge the presence of our brethren and visitors when we assemble together to worship, we must remember the most important reason for our assembly — to come before Almighty God. What a shame it would be to look pleasant to our fellow man but appear unacceptable before our God. Let's take the necessary time to make sure we are properly prepared for worship.

Heath Rogers