

Why I Still Wear A Tie To Church

In an age when shorts, sweatpants, and bare midriff (sometimes all at the same time) are considered acceptable attire for most churches, I stand out like a wooly mammoth. In this day of extreme casual, more and more men are throwing away their ties when they go to church. Like some newly-awakened Rip Van Winkle, I still wear mine. I thought I would tell you why.

Nothing in the nature of a necktie either compels us to wear it or condemns it -- though some have tried to connect it to an evil beginning. Those who use it practice the tradition of giving honor to our Lord by dressing up a bit when they go to meet with His people to worship Him. So I ask: Is this practice encouraged or discouraged in scripture?

In the parable told by Christ in Matthew 22:11-12, the king expected each of his guests to come with the proper "*wedding garment*." Not to do so was to show disrespect for the king and for the occasion. In like manner, our forefathers felt it important to come to church with clothing that showed proper respect to the Lord and to the occasion. In different times and places, that proper respect was shown in different ways. But it was shown. Even the Saturday night bath was established for the purpose of being physically clean and properly trim on the Lord's Day

Today we swerve boldly in the other direction. We energetically oppose dressing especially for church. Many even consider it hypocritical to do so. We should come as we are and avoid any pretense. But do the dress patterns of today prove that we have a greater sincerity and are more genuine than our predecessors? I think not.

The slouchy dress that we see in worship services directly corresponds to our flippant attitude toward meeting with our Maker and Savior. We have lost our respect for the spiritual dimension of God meeting with His people. Now, we want to dress like we would at a backyard barbecue. God is everywhere. Why approach His house with any more formality than we would enter the neighborhood grocery store?

The key word for today is comfort. "Why shouldn't I feel comfortable? After all, my comfort is the main thing. I'm not going to go out of my way for anyone -- even God." We exult in our come-as-you-are philosophy. Our services have become user-friendly for everyone except God. More and more, He seems to be left out in the cold. O how we love ourselves unto death!

The Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes may be a tradition that is quickly fading away. But it was a good tradition and one whose parting is just another sign of the times -- the last times. Where is our sense of awe in the presence of God? He says He dwells in the midst of us when we meet with Him (Matthew 18:20). The church is the people, not the building. When the people of the church meet, they become the "*house of God*" (1Timothy 3:15); they become His dwelling place. What a special privilege to enter into this presence!

Psalm 96:8-9 says, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."

When I meet with the congregation of the Lord, I count it not a burden, but an honor to give extra pains in preparation, in physical cleanliness, and in dressing up. I count it a privilege to wear my Sunday best. Any discomfort I may feel from a tie about my neck, from a coat about my body, or from clothes too good for playing kickball is offset by the solemnity and wonder of the occasion.

It is seldom that we in America get to suffer anything for the Savior who suffered so much for us. The least I can do (and I mean the least) is to honor Him by dressing more formally when I come to His church than I do for other events. Certainly, I can suffer a necktie for Him.

David Reagan