

IMPROVING OUR SERVICE

Lesson 7

Public Scripture Reading

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Public Scripture Reading Is Important.

1. OT examples: Ex. 24:7; Deut. 31:10-13; Josh. 8:34-35; 2 K. 22:8ff (2 Chron. 34:29ff); and Neh. 8:1-18.
2. NT examples: Lk. 4:16ff; Ac. 13:27; 15:21; 2 Cor. 3:15; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 1 Tim. 4:13; and Rev. 1:3.

B. Public Scripture Reading Should Be Taken Seriously.

1. God speaks to man through public scripture reading. You should read in such a way as not to distract in any way from God's method of speaking to us. Remember, read with dignity. You are reading the most important message to man in the whole world!
2. Man, in general, hears very little of God's word. The Bible is the best seller, but it is hardly read, or heard by many. You should read in such a way as to promote an interest in, and understanding of, God's word.

II. SIX PUBLIC SCRIPTURE READING MISTAKES.

A. No Preparation or Practice.

B. No Announcement or Introduction.

C. No Punctuation or Voice Inflection.

D. No Volume.

E. No Order: too fast, too slow, getting lost, speaking unknown words, mispronouncing words, etc.

F. No enthusiasm.

III. BETTER PUBLIC SCRIPTURE READING.

A. Be Heard (see Supplement 1).

B. Be Understood.

1. Before you stand up.

- a) Read through the selected passage of scripture (more than once if possible) to "get the feel" of the passage, before reading it publicly. If you are reading publicly for the first time, it would be good to practice orally several times before it is your time to read. You can practice reading your selected scripture at home before you come to the worship service.
- b) Read from a version that is easy for you to read. Suggestion: *New King James Version* or the *New American Standard Version*.

- c) Understand each word you are reading. It is hard to read something in a convincing manner if you are not sure what it means yourself. You may need to ask someone for a word definition or a word pronunciation. Use a dictionary, if necessary, to look up unknown words. Practice out loud saying hard-to-pronounce words or names. Self-pronouncing Bibles are helpful.
 - d) As time permits, do all you can to understand the passage before you read it (author? date? audience? context? purpose? type of scripture? speaker? etc.).
 - e) If more than one passage is read, you may want to mark each one so you won't be fumbling around trying to find them.
2. Before you read.
 - a) Announce loudly and clearly, the book, chapter, and verse you plan to read, and then give the audience time to find the selected passage. Repeat your announcement.
 3. As you read.
 - a) Be careful not to hold your Bible in front of your face or bury your head in your Bible.
 - b) Maintain eye contact with the audience by looking up from time to time. You can place your finger beside the verse to keep from losing your place.
 - c) Observe punctuation with your voice (comma, period, question mark, etc.).
 - d) Use voice inflection (emphasis) when possible. Do not speak with a weak, monotone voice. The audience should not have to strain to hear you.
 - e) If two or more persons speak in the passage being read, be sure you help the audience distinguish the different persons with different voice inflections.
 - f) Do not speak too fast or too slow.
 - g) Articulate and enunciate. Speak distinctly. Do not slur, mumble, or run your words together.
 - h) Do not distract from the reading with poor posture or distracting movements.
- C. Be Natural.
1. Be yourself. Avoid two things: a) an artificial "pious tone", or "holy tone;" or, b) a sloppy, careless, thoughtless reading.
- D. Be Enthusiastic.
1. Read energetically and enthusiastically.
- E. Be Creative.
1. Select the passage with care. Choose a passage of scripture that goes well with the sermon, Lord's supper, collection, or special occasion.
 2. Choose a passage that carries a complete thought, not just a fragment. Try not to start reading in the middle of a thought or a sentence.

3. Know the background of the passage and give a brief introduction, when necessary, to the passage before you read it.

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. Let's Go Out Now and Provide Good Public Scripture Reading.
- B. Class Motto: "I Will Try To Do Better!"