

## HOW TO LISTEN TO GOSPEL SERMONS

Text: Luke 8:18

INTRO: Many attend worship services because they KNOW it is where God wants them to be on the 1st day of the week. Their motive is good--but they have never readily learned how to listen properly. As they struggle to stay awake, their fishy-eyed stare is as embarrassing to them as it is irritating to the speaker. But there IS an answer to the problem. Let's consider some ways you can become a better listener.

I. IF POSSIBLE, BE RESTED. We are often weakest spiritually when we are weak physically.

- A. Esau, Gen. 25:29-34.
- B. Jesus, Matt. 4:2-4
- C. Likely, you already KNOW this from personal experience.

II. BEFORE THE SERVICE, & PERHAPS AFTER TAKING COMMUNION & WHILE WAITING FOR OTHERS TO BE SERVED, BREATHE A SILENT PRAYER TO GOD.

- A. Pray for the speaker.
  - 1. That he may speak with boldness, Acts 4:29
  - 2. That he may speak plainly, to be understood.
  - 3. That he will be strengthened to back up his sermon with a godly life, Luke 22:31-32.

Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. (Heb. 13:18).

- B. Pray for yourself. Mark 9:24 "help my unbelief."
  - 1. That you may be able to dismiss from your mind cares & problems of a worldly nature & center your attention on the lesson to be presented.
  - 2. That you may have the courage to examine yourself honestly, open-mindedly, in the light of God's truth.

- C. Pray for others, that they may open their minds to receive

God's word.

III. STOP TRYING TO STAY AWAKE & START DOING SOMETHING WITH WHAT YOU ARE HEARING. James 1:22-25

- A. Get a Bible, preferably your own & read along from the text when the speaker is presenting a textual sermon.
- B. Ask yourself a few questions re the sermon.
  - 1. What is the subject?
  - 2. What is the apparent aim?
  - 3. What benefit will come from knowing & living by these truths?
- C. Take notes. A very few individuals find mental notes sufficient. For most, written notes are needed if we are to remember the truths being presented.

ILLUSTRATION: Did you ever talk with someone who told you he had heard an excellent sermon? As you made conversation, you asked him what was the subject of the sermon, & he couldn't remember, but he remembered it was really a good lesson?

- D. Evaluate the logic of the speaker. Take note of points you feel need more or less emphasis.
- E. Allow mental pictures to form.
  - 1. You are there with Paul in Athens.
  - 2. With Mary at the foot of the cross.
  - 3. Ask yourself, "Am I reacting as they did?"
  - 4. Look for opportunities to apply the Bible truths in your life. Matt. 7:24-26.

IV. USE THE NOTES YOU HAVE TAKEN TO STIMULATE FURTHER STUDY OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

- A. Look up the Scriptures & re-read them. JN 5:39; Ax 17:11
- B. Re-phrase the preacher's arguments in your own words.
- C. Make a conscious effort to DO something you have been leaving undone. James 2:12-26.

V. TALK WITH SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT THE SERMON.  
DON'T LET IT DIE WITH THE CLOSING PRAYER. LET  
IT LIVE IN YOUR HEART & IN YOUR LIFE.

READ JOHN 1:35-37, 40-42, 43-45

CONCLUSION: If you will observe these suggestions...

1. You will truly enjoy the time spent in worship.
2. You will find that you have a better influence on those you would like to convert.
  
3. You will be a better Christian all around.
4. And, amazingly, you'll discover that the preacher doesn't seem to preach as long as he used to.

La Porte, TX, March 27, 1977

Cedar Park, TX, June 5, 1977 (meeting)

Bible camp, Sabinal, TX, June 14, 1979

Hutto, TX, October 7, 1979 (meeting)

Dickinson, TX, March 25, 1984 (meeting)

Exton, PA, June 5, 1988

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, September 20, 1998