

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

September 14

2008

Editor's note: Our meeting with Greg Gwin is just a little over a month away (October 19-24). I hope every member here is working toward the success of this effort. Many times we act as though the only thing we need to do in preparation for such a meeting is simply invite a preacher to come to do the preaching and maybe mail a few announcements and all is in readiness for a good meeting. The following article written by Raymond Harris several years ago gives some very practical information to help each and every one of us to realize that much work and preparation is necessary if we are to have a successful meeting. I commend it to you. *(JH)*



Preparing for the Meeting

Preparation of the Local Church

There is an old saying, "Anything done well, must be prepared for." That is certainly true of something as important as a series of meetings where the gospel of Christ is to be preached. Anything that involves the eternal souls of men and women should never be taken lightly. Considerable forethought and preparation should precede all the endeavors of the church.

Local Preacher and Teachers

The classroom teachers at all levels should begin to talk up the meeting at least a month before it starts. In the classes for the younger children special posters, banners and projects can excite the interest of the students. Teachers thus can help to spur interest in the

meeting throughout all family members.

Likewise the local preacher should "preach up" the meeting a Sunday or two before it is to start. His interest and enthusiasm can have a great deal to do with the mental attitude of the whole church. Announcements, sermons and classes can "set the stage" for the first day of the meeting.

Special Prayers

For several weeks before the meeting, those leading the public prayers should invoke God's blessings upon the meeting preacher, his family and his work. They should pray that nothing would hinder his involvement in the special effort to preach the gospel.

All members of the local church should be encouraged to remember the meeting preacher in their private prayers. Public and private prayers should be made in behalf of his health, his family and his safe travel.

Song Leaders

Song leaders should be selected and assigned for every service. These assignments should be made far enough before the meeting to allow the leaders to select their songs and prepare themselves thoroughly. The singing is most important. It can make or break the meeting. It can excite both the audience and the preacher; or, it can drag them down and all but kill the whole affair. Song leaders have a great responsibility in a gospel meeting.

Other Special Assignments

Every member should be urged to meet and greet all those attending the meeting. Some churches find it beneficial to assign specific couples to station themselves at each entry door. There they have the special responsibility to meet and get the names and addresses of all visitors. This information can be invaluable for meeting follow up. Also, it often helps in the growth and development of the couples involved.

All Members

Of course every member should be informed the first of each year about the dates of all meetings and special events of the church. By doing this, a member will have no excuse for scheduling vacations and other personal activities that will conflict with church activities.

Every member should be urged to make a personal effort to invite or bring someone to the meeting. Neighbors, relatives, co-workers, former classmates and friends should receive special attention. In recent polls, the number one reason given for visiting a church was "someone invited me."

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The Building

Most of us do a little extra house cleaning when we invite visitors into our homes. The same should be true of the church building at meeting time. Needed repairs should be made and the general appearance of the building should be neat and clean. Often a strong first impression is formed by the appearance of the church building. Whether that is right or wrong, it matters little when we are trying to reach people to save their souls. A little extra work on the building at meeting time can pay big dividends.

Also, special attention should be given to the temperatures in the auditorium. In our meeting preparation we should be sure that furnaces and air conditioners are in good working order. If visitors suffer through extremes of hot or cold, the sermon may have little effect on them.

The Preacher's Preparation

A gospel preacher who is invited to do the speaking at a special series of services should feel a great weight of responsibility. Regardless of how experienced the preacher may be or the size of the church involved, every such invitation accepted should be looked upon as a great challenge.

1. The preacher should do all within his power to arrive for the meeting in good health. A sick preacher will likely preach a sick meeting.
2. The preacher should do all within his power to arrive for the meeting as rested as possible. Long hours of travel and multiple meetings may make this difficult. The exhausted, bone weary preacher will have a hard time generating powerful, soul-stirring sermons.

3. The preacher should limit his outside interests. I have seen meetings that never got off the ground because the preacher had his mind on everything but the book. A preacher caught up in business interests, sports, an up-coming debate or domestic problems will give precious little of himself to the work at hand.

4. The preacher should be prepared spiritually. He must give the same sincere effort whether the church numbers 30 or 300. Also, he must graciously accept the food and accommodations provided for him during his stay.

5. Sermon selection and preparation is of paramount importance. This may be the most vital part of the preacher's preparation. If he can figure it out, the preacher needs to preach, what is needed, where it's needed, when it's needed. The preacher should pray about this matter. He should not try to preach the same eight sermons everywhere he goes. He should not preach certain sermons just because those are the ones he likes. Every meeting should be special! In his preparation, the preacher should try to determine the needs of the local church and do his best to meet them.

The public proclamation of God's word is an awesome responsibility. Local churches and meeting preachers alike should prepare, as if all depended upon them; and pray, as if all depended upon the Lord.

Raymond Harris

<i>Belleville church of Christ</i>	
5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258	
www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	Elders
Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter. . . (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.	
Evangelist	Deacons
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
	Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514