

# **Worship Assembly Etiquette**

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The word etiquette is defined by Webster's dictionary as "the conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life." Synonyms of the word are manners or protocol. As Christians, we are to conduct ourselves in a mannerly way. Peter writes in 1 Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." On occasions, we need to be reminded of our manners during the assembly. There are ways in which we can conduct ourselves that will not distract others while they worship God. Everyone has experienced trying to worship while being distracted by some fellow clipping his nails or while someone is wrestling around because of time or while someone is talking. Following are three principles for your consideration.

## **Worship with the Whole Heart**

The first principle is to worship God with the whole heart by removing the cares of this world. The great commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). This principle is applicable to our whole life and therefore to any part of it as in the case of worship. Jesus further taught, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). God requires us to worship Him from our inner beings and to be completely absorbed in our worship of Him. When the cares of this world is taking our minds away from our worship and those cares become more important than our worship then we need to re-think our thinking. If everyone was totally involved in worship, there would be no one clipping their nails, wrestling around, or talking. Brethren, let us be entirely engrossed in our worship. We should be thinking about the words we sing, envisioning the crucified Lord during the Lord's supper, and considering the words of exhortation during the preaching.

## **The Golden Rule**

A second principle is what is often called the "Golden Rule." Jesus taught, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). A lot of distractions could be avoided if each of us considered everyone else assembled. If we are earnest in our thinking, we do not want to be distracted. Since we do not want to be distracted, we ought not distract

others. Certainly this would be an application of the “Golden Rule” concerning our topic.

### **Be Aware of Our Own Actions**

The third principle is to always be aware of our own actions. Many distractions are unintentional. Sometimes we do not think about what we are doing. Some preachers rattle around their coins and keys in their pockets but I’m convinced it is not intentional. It is just a nervous habit. If they were aware of the problem, they would cease. To be constantly aware of our every actions is to be vigilant. Peter exhorted, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

It would be great if we could have a distraction free worship assembly but that is not realistic. We need to do our part in eliminating as many distractions as we can but often times we will just have to shut out the distractions from our minds. We can shut out some distractions when we are watching television or at the ball game. Therefore, we ought to be able to do the same at the assembly.