

church of Christ at Greenwood

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To Habitual Late-Comers

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How often are you late for worship services? Once every two months? Once or twice every month? At least once a week? If you fall into one of these categories, these thoughts are for you.

It must be extremely difficult to get your mind on the worship or Bible class when you're late. There's the stress that you experienced as you anxiously glanced at your watch every few seconds while hurrying to the building. "Maybe they'll start late," you kept thinking. You're not so fortunate, though, so you face the embarrassment of everyone turning around and staring as you come in. "Why don't they have better manners?" you think, as you try to focus on their guilt rather than your own. You glance at your neighbor's Bible or song book to find out what's going on, but it just takes a while to get into the groove. And, worst of all, you may be showing, unconsciously no doubt, a disregard for the occasion, for we are rarely late for any occasion which we really think is important.

Your habit is a hindrance to others, too. The thoughts of sincere worshipers are disturbed as you come in and find a seat. The Bible class teacher may feel the need to interrupt his train of thought to "catch you up" on what has been said. If there are several of you at the same congregation, the singing suffers. In short, your practice may be far more discouraging to sincere people than you have ever realized.

We could schedule our services fifteen minutes later if that would help, but we are quite sure this would place your arrival time fifteen minutes later, too. You see, habitual tardiness results from planning too close "to the minute." The solution is really simple. If you live five minutes from the building, plan to leave home twenty minutes before starting time instead of five minutes before starting time. If you succeed in leaving according to plans, you will have time to speak to other early arrivals, and to prepare yourself for worship. On the other hand, if some last minute problem caused you to leave later than you planned, you can still arrive before services begin. This is exactly what people do who are "never late." Why don't you try it?

Sometime the fault lies with just one member of a family who causes all the rest of the family to be late. If you're that one member, you are being inconsiderate and unfair to your family. I urge you to be more helpful and thoughtful.

You may be late rather frequently because of circumstances beyond your control. This article does not pertain to you. You come on to services even if you are thirty minutes late.

What will this article accomplish? I shall probably never know. But if it leads just one habitual late-comer to become a habitual early-comer, it might prove to be this writer's most effective article. Will you be that one person?