



# Northside Proclaimer

*Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord*

1 Thessalonians 1.8

**Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!**

**June 28, 2015**

## **“What Visitors Ought To Expect”**

*Bryan Garlock*

Sometimes being the preacher gives opportunity to see and talk with visitors more than the average member. Thus I've talked with many visitors throughout the years and have gained insight to their thoughts concerning their visit with the Lord's church.

Sometimes when speaking to visitors they make mention of other churches in the area and the way they treated them as a visitor. Makes you wonder what people have said about Northside! Below is a summary of the things I hear from visitors, things I see when visitors attend and things we ought to consider when dealing with visitors. Please note that this is not a reflection on Northside necessarily, but an overview of concerns gathered from several sources.

First and foremost, the building, apart from the members, is one of the best evangelistic tools available to any local church. With the building we can evangelize from the pulpit, have Bible studies and classes, etc. Obviously the building is not to substitute for the work of individual members teaching neighbors, friends, etc., but, when used properly, the building can be used to evangelize the lost. In this article we want to express that point concerning visitors.

We ought to stay alert for all possible visitors. When one arrives at the building, it is vital that all members introduce themselves and welcome the visitors within the first ten mins of arrival.

Since the visitor has come to the building, which places an opportunity and contact right into our laps, it is detrimental for members to remain seated, faces forward with no acknowledgment of the visitor. Yes the visitor sees this and yes they remember this! It troubles me when I look around the room and notice the negligence towards visitors and know the visitor sees this too and it disturbs me when I have to go to members and say, “please go meet our visitor.”

Our love and concern for each lost soul who walks through the doors should be evident from their arrival to their departure. It has often concerned me why so many members spend so much time chatting and laughing with other members, people they can call or see throughout the week, and disregard the soul standing there begging for attention. This is further seen when members arrive, walk in, see the visitor sitting down and walk past them as if they aren't there. Occasionally, some will look over, nod their head at the visitor and “forward their face” again.

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## Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email me to add announcements, thanks.
- Remember our upcoming gospel meeting! July 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>  
Flyers available in foyer!

### Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Jun 28: 1 Kgs 20-21  
Jun 29: 1 Kgs 22, 2 Chr 18  
Jun 30: 2 Chr 19-23  
Jul 1: Obad 1, Ps 82-83  
Jul 2: 2 Kgs 1-4  
Jul 3: 2 Kgs 5-8  
Jul 4: 2 Kgs 9-11

Therefore I would encourage all to spend time with the visitors. Remember, they will not stay around long. Many times they come in at the last minute and leave immediately afterwards. Approach them first and then spend time with your sisters and brothers.

Finally, when a visitor goes to a denomination or an unsound "church" and is met with a swarm of members and attention as if they are a celebrity that reduces the chances of them returning here. Get to know them. They may be your future brother or sister in Christ.

Next, visitors ought to see members participating. Imagine with me the following illustration. You're visiting and sitting in Bible class. You look around and see some with no Bibles or at best closed Bibles. Worship begins and you look around and some are not singing and at best mumbling the words. You notice some of the members do not give to further the gospel or others are talking and playing during the Lord's Supper. Finally the preacher begins to preach and he's calling out Bible passages and yet some aren't turning in their Bibles. Some are talking or nodding off, etc. As a visitor, especially one who was not met with attention upon arriving at the building, what is your impression? Will you return?

When we are worshipping, visitors ought to see us approaching God with reverence and awe (Heb. 12.28). Our visitors ought to see us paying attention in class and to the preacher. Notice the principle found in Acts 17.11: "Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." Be sure to "search the Scriptures" while the teacher is teaching. For your sake and for the sake of the visitor!

What's more, a point I really hate to make, church begins at 9:30, not 9:35 or even 10:30; the sign says 9:30. Our visitors ought not to see the members arriving at 9:30 or 3, 5 or even 10 mins after we begin. Further, what a shame it is when our visitors see us sneaking in during the Lord's Supper! Please get to the building early for the sake of the visitor.

While we are on the subject of arriving late, the visitor, as well as everyone else, wonders why some stand up and leave the building during the invitation song. What's so important that we can't wait until the "amen" is said? For the sake of the visitor, please remain seated!

Finally, besides interaction with the visitors, follow up with them. This is important and, frankly, this isn't just the preacher's "job." Every member should make a point to call, send a card or even visit with the visitor. Following up by contacting them insures that your concern for them reaches beyond the walls of the building. Many times women within the church ask: "What can I do to serve?" One of the many ways you can serve is by following up with the visitors with a card to brighten their day.

Just think: You show up to the building as a visitor. You're treated as royalty. You see care and concern from the members. You see the members participating in services and actually *wanting to be there*. As you depart, you feel as though the whole church is seeing you off and then finally, within a week you receive cards, phone calls or visitation, etc. What kind of impression has the church made on you? Will you return?

Ultimately our concern is to teach visitors the gospel. Invite them to ask questions and make sure to ask them questions too! Sometimes important information is gained through questions; information that could lead to their conversion. Ask them for a Bible study or to allow you to visit with them, etc. Again, the visitors coming to the building does not negate the command to "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16.15), but it does give us an opportunity to teach someone the gospel. When they open the door to the building, it should be "evangelism made easy." Let's take advantage! BG