

# When People Visit

Oak Ridge Church of Christ

July 7, 2013

by: Chris Eppler

## REFERENCE

I Corinthians 12-14

## READING

I Corinthians 14:23-25

## OBJECTIVE

We often take for granted what people see when they get here. Our visitors should be a prime consideration in everything we do.

## KEY POINTS

It is easy to forget what things look like to an outsider and create an environment that is hostile to visitors.

They are an invaluable resource that we should be careful not to alienate!

Every aspect of our service should be with the visitor in mind.

Sources: Mark Copeland,  
Sewell Hall

## I. Introduction

- A. We all work on our houses pretty regularly. They require continual maintenance.
  1. We likely think that our house looks pretty good. We know that there are some things that need some work, but overall it looks pretty good.
  2. However, have you ever gone away on an extended vacation only to return and see your house with the eyes of visitors?!
  3. Molly and I have the “pleasure” of this a couple times a year as our family lives quite a way from here.
  4. After being gone for a couple of weeks, you see your house the way others likely do.
  5. The only thing that you can see is the peeling paint, the piece of gutter that has fallen, the overgrown grass, the window that needs to be replaced, the hedges that need to be trimmed, and so on!
- B. As to God’s house, His church, we need to have the eyes of visitors!
  1. It is very easy to sit here in our worship week after week and think that everything looks pretty good.
  2. After all, we have always been doing things this way and it has worked up until now.
  3. However, we need to have the eyes of visitors, because our visitors certainly do!
- C. One of the main considerations that is in my mind with every lesson is, “who is likely to be there to hear this.”
  1. Some lessons might better fit a Sunday night audience or vice versa.
  2. I do not always get it right. I had Ernie tell me one time that I should have preached a certain lesson in the morning rather than the night.
  3. He was not telling me anything I did not know, for I had already felt that way about it myself, but both lessons were time sensitive and needed to be preached that day! Only so many hours in one day!
- D. Everything in our service should be done with consideration for those that are visiting us.
  1. Our visitors do not see things the way that we do.
  2. Our visitors do not understand things as we do.
    - ~ Thus the explanation that the collection is for members.
  3. We need to be mindful of these visitors and understand that we have no greater resource than those that walk right through the front doors!
- E. The Corinthians had a number of problems.
  1. The problem that Paul is correcting in chapters 12-14 is that of spiritual gifts being misused.
  2. As a result of their behavior, visitors thought they were crazy when they should have been being convicted and edified!

3. Thinking we are crazy due to the message is one thing, but thinking we are crazy due to our lack of consideration of them is an entirely different thing!

## II. What a Visitor Should Expect

### A. Edification (I Corinthians 14:26)

1. We always speak about how the members here should edify one another, but what about the visitors?
2. Should we not consider how to stimulate them to love and good deeds? (Hebrews 10:23-25)
3. The word edification is found a number of times in this chapter.
4. Certainly it should be a consideration in everything we do. If it does not edify, we should remove it!
5. Edify does not necessarily mean “positive”, but it means to strengthen!
6. Have you ever worshipped at a place where you were barely extended a greeting? Not very uplifting.

### B. Exhortation/Comfort (I Corinthians 14:3)

1. Visitors should expect and receive exhortation. This is encouragement to do what is right and to leave what is wicked.
2. They are comforted by the love of God. Paul tells us that God must be completely presented, mercy and justice!
3. Many churches leave people with an imbalanced view of God.
  - a. They focus solely on the love of God and people go away feeling that there is nothing they need to do because God loves them.
  - b. Of course, there is the reverse, where a church does nothing but speak of fire and brimstone and shape up or ship out, so that is what the people do, ship out!
  - c. Visitors should expect and receive exhortation to good, yet comfort also!

### C. Teaching that Can Be Understood (I Corinthians 14:19; I Corinthians 2:1, Text)

1. Many people are very impressed by the ability of their preacher to quote scripture or preach from memory or his eloquence. While all of these are good things, that is not the reason we come together.
2. I remember sitting in the audience of a preacher. He began to preach with his hand on his bible and he never opened it or a note! His memory was quite impressive, his lesson was good, but what I found dismaying is that I can not remember a single comment afterwards about his words but they were rather about his presentation!
3. Our visitors need to be considered with every bit of teaching that takes place here, whether it be in the auditorium or the classes in the back! How sad if they were to come hear a lesson that was informational, but could not be understood or applied! Have you ever sat through a sermon and wondered what the speaker was talking about or what it had to do with you?

### D. Participation by the members (I Corinthians 14:16)

1. The brethren said amen at the close of prayers.
2. The brethren were involved in what was taking place.
3. It is very discouraging for a visitor to look around and feel that people are not invested in what is taking place!

### E. Order (I Corinthians 14:27-32, 40)

1. This can turn a visitor off very quickly, when they come into our assembly and it looks like we haven't got a clue what is going on!
2. Every aspect of our service should be well thought out! Distractions should be removed.

### F. Peace (I Corinthians 14:33, I Corinthians 3:3-4)

1. Visitors can spot brotherly love or hatred immediately. How terrible to turn off visitors by such!

## III. Conclusion

- A. We do well to view ourselves with visitor's eyes. If you are a visitor, you can come to the truth now...