

# Sincere questions about a worship service that may sound cynical at times

## PRE-SERVICE

1. Do the staff and the lead volunteers really understand the purpose and the high importance of the worship assembly-service? Do they attend and participate?
2. Do greeters and ushers know that the attenders and the guests are to be the object of their attention and not each other?
3. How important is it to start on time? To end on time? Does “people do not say anything” cover the variety of times to end, or is the survey right that says they do not invite friends if they cannot count on punctuality?
4. Is there truth to that survey that shows that over 80% of guests come because they are invited by a friend who attends? If so, does that mean we must do more to urge our people to invite others and save on some of the advertising budget? Could it be true that the three things that must be there, as discovered on that same survey, are excellence of the service, consistency of mood and approach week by week, and punctuality?
5. Does the 70-80% full rule, to plan on adding a service or venue when you are that full, really have validity like all the experts say?

## SERVICE INGREDIENTS

6. Would just one hymn that sings well and with good theology take away the sting many older people talk about when they criticize the worship?

7. Do a prayer and song related to the response to the sermon help people respond to God on the text more than, “That’s all, folks – see you next week”?
8. Should the guitar player’s impromptu prayer, “God, I love that song, and I thought of it this week when I was having a bad time...” really meet the same purpose of a public worshipful pastoral prayer carefully planned and modeled by the pastor?
9. Does the neglect of Paul’s command to have “the public reading of Scripture” (I Tim 4:13) open many churches to have no answer to challenges to what Paul says elsewhere about sexuality or gossip?
10. Do so many announcements at a worship service make people allow their minds to wander and miss even the important ones? Is the rule about “three (announcements) in three (minutes)” max for these news promotions even better than the often-quoted “five in five”?
11. Does the worship leader do better by skipping ad-lib comments and staying with what he is good at? And by avoiding prayers or segues no one else can hear (okay, God) because of the background music?
12. Does the girl singer in the really tight outfit really not distract the other men?

## SERMONS

13. Does it matter to God if speakers just use a verse or two as a jumping off point before saying what they like and think about life, rather than proclaiming then explaining what the Bible actually says in the proper contexts?

14. Is 45-50 minutes too long unless you are as good and authoritative as John MacArthur or Mark Driscoll?
15. Is it really better to say “we should” rather than “you should” so people do not feel you I mean we are talking down to them?
16. Should we wait until the last few minutes of the sermon for the application or make applications the whole way through? Is the old axiom that every sermon is going after a change in the way we feel, act, or believe – is that still true?
17. Does variety in pace, volume, and even where we are standing help to keep attention as much as the experts say it does? Is the appropriate pause as powerful as some say it is?
18. Does a smile really project warmth and love as much as the smilers say?
19. Is too much content rather than a main point as ineffective as too little content or just glib talk?
20. Is reading the whole sermon as boring as some make it, unless you can wield passion with 4 x 6 cards as well as Bill Hybels?
21. Is good strong long preparation as vital as all the teachers of preaching make it? Is it dangerous that once in a while the sermon that got cheated of prep time flies so well, apparently?
22. Is attention span really as short as the speech or sermon teachers say it is, calling for many small “windows” that allow light in?
23. Does the cross of Christ really need to be brought in to sermons as often as our Lord would say? 😊

24. Do head ushers take that job because of the tradition that they never have to hear the sermon?
25. Does speaking with passion just mean louder?

## POST SERMON

26. Is the plan for after the sermon as important as that for before the sermon?
27. Do people get distracted when the instrumentalists and “ooo-ahhh singers” come onto the stage (often noisily) during the closing prayer of the sermon? Does it seem like a change in subject and purpose when the sermon ends and someone else announces or starts leading an unrelated song?
28. Does an abrupt transition after the sermon conclusion -- “Let’s take an offering!” or “See you next week, I hope!” – hurt the personal response need of each person? Do you think this is a reaction to the former habit of “Every head bowed and every eye closed” push for private (“This is just between you and God!”) then public (“Now if you made that private decision you should not be ashamed to make it public.”) decisions?
29. Is a quiet prayer time that allows people to ask God’s strength to feel or do or believe what the sermon advocates, too contrived, or can it help people and their spirits?
30. Could it be that guests receive greetings and warmth after the service even more than before the service because of the need then to find where to sit or where their children should go?
31. Is there any good way for people to get counsel or someone to pray with them or explain what was just said or done? Is the Billy Graham-type come forward invitation still effective for some?