

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

Study Sunday 10:00 AM

Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM

Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM

Singing every 2nd Sunday evening

Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

Kris Vilander, (256) 472-1065

E-mail: kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org**Website:** www.haysmillchurchofchrist.org

"...But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you,"

—1 Corinthians 14:24,25

**Servants during April:**

Songleader: Dwight (6), Stanley (13), Larry (20), Dwight (27)

Reading: Stanley; Mike

Announcements: Stanley

Table: Larry, Marty, Mike M

Wednesday Lesson: Kris (2), Larry (9), Stanley (16), Kris (23), Larry (30)

Lawn Mowing (week starting): Larry (6), Kris (13), Marty (20), Stanley (27)

Area Meetings:

Eastside (Russellville), 13-16, Joe Greer; **New Georgia,** 20-23, David Maxson

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

"Examine everything carefully..." 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

Volume 7

April 13, 2025

Number 45

What Visitors have a Right to Expect

By Sewell Hall

1 Corinthians 14 contains about as much information as the scriptures provide relating to the conduct of a church service. The major difference in the service described and one in which we might be engaged today was the presence of spiritual gifts. Those gifts were necessary in the absence of a written New Testament. The gift of prophecy made it possible to know God's will by direct revelation, and such gifts as tongues (the miraculous ability to speak and understand foreign languages) confirmed the message of the prophets. Today the reading, explanation and application of New Testament teaching serve the same purpose as prophecy in the early church. The principles in this chapter are instructive for us today.

Verse 23 informs us of the persons present: "Therefore if the

whole church comes together in one place...and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers..." Here we have "the whole church" plus possible visitors who are uninformed (weak Christians?) and/or unbelievers (non-Christians). The verses that follow make it clear that we should be concerned about the impression left on those visitors. Our conduct may cause a visitor to conclude that we are "out of our mind" or it may result in his conversion, v23-25.

In suggesting ways of obtaining such a desired response, nothing is said concerning the building. One preacher we knew encouraged a church to go deep in debt to build a building on a prominent corner so the townspeople would stop with admiration and exclaim, "This is the Church of Christ!" The early church

met in the Jewish temple, in a 3rd floor room, even in caves. A cathedral is not what truth seekers are seeking. Neither are they looking primarily for an entertaining and eloquent speaker. They are “hungry and thirsty for righteousness” and we must see that they find it among us. Following are some qualities they must observe if this goal is to be achieved.

Edification: The word appears again and again in this chapter. Verse 26 summarizes it: “Let all things be done for edification.” Edification is building up. Every attendant should leave an assembly a better person than when he came. Every lesson, every sermon, every song, every prayer, every facet of the service should contribute to that and everyone who leads in such activity should have this goal in mind.

Exhortation and Comfort: are added in verse 3. Exhortation urges those present to do right and avoid wrong. Comfort is accomplished by telling them of God’s forgiveness and longsuffering toward those who are weak so long as they are diligently seeking to do His will. Sin must be condemned, but there must be the encouragement to do what is right and the assurance that one can please God.

Teaching Simple Enough To Be Understood: Paul preferred to speak five words with understanding that he might teach others than 10,000 that could not be understood, v19. The purpose of preaching is not to showcase the eloquence, the

vocabulary or the education of the preacher. Paul intentionally avoided “excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring the testimony of God,” 1 Cor 2:1. A sermon, regardless of how sound or erudite, is worthless if the hearers do not understand it. It was said of Jesus that “the common people heard Him gladly,” Mk 12:37. As we preach, we should be more concerned for instructing the uninformed and unbelievers among us than for gaining the approval of those who already know and believe what we are saying. Similarly, our singing should not be to impress visitors with our ability as leaders or with the congregation’s ability to sing hard songs, or even to sing simple ones artfully. The purpose must be “teaching and admonishing one another,” Col. 3:16. I am afraid too many of our songs produce more entertainment than edification.

Participation: It is evident from verse 16 that it was common for brethren in a service to be participants rather than spectators. They demonstrated their approval at “the giving of thanks.” In too many congregations these days there is very little indication of involvement with prayers and teaching. When there is, all too often it is with clapping in imitation of the television preachers. Clapping is not authorized in the scriptures, but there is an approved method of expressing agreement: saying “the Amen.” Visitors are impressed when they see involvement, whether by singing, by

saying “Amen” or by looking up scriptures and taking notes.

Decency and Order: Participation is important, but it must still be decent and orderly, v40. Services need to begin on time and be planned in advance so that those who lead in the services may be prepared. Announcements need to be submitted in advance so that they do not have to be shouted from the audience. The worshippers must demonstrate reverence if visitors are to “worship God and report that God is truly among you,” v25.

Peace: Perhaps the word “peace” in verse 33 is intended to encourage the same decency and order as is taught in verse 40. But is it doing violence to the passage to suggest that visitors should see a peaceful relationship among the members and not the confusion that all too often results from bad attitudes? After all, Jesus said, “By this all will know that

you are My disciples, if you have love for one another,” Jn 13:35. We have known of visitors who did not return to a congregation because, as they observed, “those people don’t like one another.”

The Goal to be Achieved: Some visitors whose hearts are hard will not be favorably impressed regardless of the conduct of a service. But if a visitor comes in who has a “noble and good heart,” Lk 8:15, “he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you,” v24,25. May this be the effect of every service on visitors who come our way!

This article is surely dealing with a larger congregation, and I may not agree with all of it; but there is still much to consider—and it seemed a good time to share it, in view of our coming meeting.

—via **Focus Magazine**, v7n3, Issue 68 

Let’s all make plans to attend every night of our
“Gospel meeting”
with **Adam Smith**, May 25-28!

❧ *Remember in Prayer* ❧

Betty may shortly fitted with a port to facilitate dialysis. Our beloved brother **Mike B** passed away Monday of last week; fervently remember **Deborah** and **Serenity** in prayer as well as **Betty...** and **Barbara; Carolyn;**

Hazel; Joshua V and family; Kathy M; Pam B, Julie, Kaylee and Violet; Mark and Vickie Horton; and John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard—who, last I heard, is currently in Houston Children’s Hospital. 