

THE ELDERS AND THE PULPIT



Volume 5

Section 6



General Conference
Ministerial Association



“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

2 Timothy 4:1-2





**I. Have a deep respect
for the pulpit**



The pulpit should not be used:

- *To entertain the congregation.*
- With the goal of *exalting yourselves.*
- Only to fill up a space of time within a scheduled program.
- With the intention of *hurting or attacking* anyone.



- To tell *jokes or stories just to make people laugh.*
- For the purpose of proving *personal viewpoints and theories.*
- With the goal of showing who are the *best preachers in the church.*
- To speak *more about the enemy than about Jesus.*





- To *destroy, taunt or underestimate* the faith of others.
- Such that it creates *division in the church*.
- In order to *bring about controversy*, as this never works in favor of harmony.
- If you are *unsure of divine approval*.





- So that it *confuses the congregation.*
- Without proper *preparation, both in material and spirituality.*
- Without first *taking time to pray.*
- If you are not sure that you are bringing a message that gives *hope.*





- *“Preach not because you have to say something, but because you have something to say.”
—Richard Whately*
- *“God has not promised to bless our arguments, but His Word.”
—Anonymous*





II. Preach clearly





- No matter how profound or simple the subject, the message must always be presented clearly, so that people *understand it and can identify with what you are trying to teach them.*
- Remember that a good *illustration helps them to better understand and register the lessons.*



- If something is not *clear to you, it is best that you appraise yourselves first before you preach it.*
- Be sure that people will *understand the message.*
- Use simple language, *in accordance with the type of audience that is listening.*



- Make sure that your audience is ***familiar with the terms being used.***
- Do not make up ***strange or complicated phrases*** that you yourselves may not be clear about their meaning.
- Neither ***confuse simple language with inadequate language.***
- Learn from Jesus, as He is the ***greatest preacher of all time.***





“The Saviour’s voice... Old and young, ignorant and learned, could catch the full meaning of His words.”

CT 240





“...and the common people heard Him gladly, for they could comprehend His words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary.”

CT 240





III. Be conscious of the tone of your voice





- Do not get accustomed to using such *dim tone that it will be difficult for people to understand you* or that may *lead them to boredom*.
- Do not get accustomed to *shouting or speaking so passionately* that it will rob your audience of the spirit of *heaven's peace*.





- Allow the *tone of your voice to reflect the kind of message that you are sharing.*
- Do not forget that *it is best to vary the tone of your voice often.*
- Do not speak so *fast that people will find it hard to follow and understand.*





- Try to pronounce your *words well so that people can clearly understand* everything you say.
- Do not lower your voice at the end of words such that the phrases sound staccato.
- Allow your words and gestures to harmonize.





“The Saviour’s voice was as music to the ears of those who had been accustomed to the monotonous, spiritless preaching of the scribes and Pharisees.”

CT 240





“Many speak in a rapid way and in a high, unnatural key... Ministers and teachers should give special attention to the cultivation of the voice.”

CT 239





IV. Avoid being monotonous or repetitive





- Be alive to the message you are *preaching and make your audience be alive to it also.*
- Achieve the above goal, but without *exaggeration or going to extremes.*
- Avoid turning your preaching into a *spectacle, a show, an entertainment filled with abrupt and exaggerated gestures.*





- Do not become *repetitive, giving the impression that you have no more to say* and are circling around the same idea already exposed.
- Do not abuse your listeners by *extending your message* such that the gist of it will be lost. Remember that there are *elderly folk and children in the audience*.





- Always *keep in focus that you are being used by God.*
- Attempt to make your audience remember the *message, not the messenger.*
- Know the proper use of *your hands.*
- Avoid using crutch words and phrases because they could wrongly impact the *understanding of the message.*





- If possible, never ***give your back to the congregation.***
- If you are going to share a story, do not make of it a ***spectacle from the pulpit,*** turning it into a comedy.





“The workman for God should make earnest efforts to become a representative of Christ, discarding all uncomely gestures and uncouth speech. He should endeavor to use correct language.”

CT 238





- Be conscious of *pronouncing well your words*.
- Mispronounced phrases not only *diminish you as preachers*, but could cause dismay in your audience.





- If you have difficulty in this area, ask for God's help and ***strive to improve.***
- ***Become avid readers*** in order to correct your shortcomings in this area.





“There is a large class who are careless in the way they speak... Every day they should make advancement... Common, cheap expressions should be replaced by sound, pure words... We should be careful not to give an incorrect pronunciation of our words.”

CT 238





V. Rightly divide your subject matter



- Do not present your theme as a ***single unit; this makes learning difficult.***
- Divide your theme into ***various topics that allow for the extraction of the most important lessons.***
- Try to emphasize each of the ***lessons that you deem should stand out.***
- Upon concluding your theme, try to ***summarize the most important lessons.***





- ***Do not overextend the number of topics and subdivisions. Four or five*** are more than sufficient.
- Remember that a seminar is different than a sermon. When presenting a seminar you can have many more divisions than in a standard sermon.





- The efficiency of your theme does not depend upon the ***amount of material that you present.***
- If the material you expose is excessive, people will end up ***confused and forgetting*** much of what was said.





**VI. Do not compare
yourselves to other
preachers**





- Do not preach so that your audience thinks you are better preachers than others.
- As preachers, ***do not seek self glory.***
- Do not use the pulpit to ***show off.***





- Neither preach in order to ***compete with each other or any other preacher*** in the church.
- Remember that it is God who gives the ***spiritual gifts and He gives to each according to His own will.***





- Seek that the *presence of God* is with you *at the pulpit*.
- If God leads you to have a responsibility, God will *help you and you will do well*.
- Never forget that *all we do, we do it for the glory of God*.





VII. Take an inventory of your listeners





- Consider their average age.
- Know the *essence of their average education.*
- Consider what is their prior *knowledge of the Gospel.*
- Analyze the *capability to pay attention of most of your audience.*





- Find out what *level of education* is best adapted for your audience.
- Be aware that in the audience there are elderly folks, children and youth, and the concentration level is *different for each of these groups.*
- Do not forget that there are *visitors present who can be very susceptible.*





- Be aware of the *prevailing standards wherein you are preaching.*
- Remember that there are *cultural elements that vary from place to place.*
- Know that there are words that have varied meanings, depending on *location and customs.*





VIII. Keep visual communication





- Do not stare at the *floor*.
- Neither look up to the *ceiling*.
- Look at your listeners eye-to-eye and do it in a *tranquil and natural manner*.





- Not looking at your audience conveys *insecurity in you and reflects it in them.*
- Neither limit yourselves to looking only at *one or two persons.*
- Keep *eye contact with everyone present.*



Looking at your audience will allow you to:



- Better convey the *message*.
- Better observe the *reaction of your audience*.
- Detect those who are most *interested*.
- Prevent some from being *distracted*.





- Provide *confidence in yourself and your listeners*.
- Evaluate the degree of *attention they are paying*.
- Establish that the communication is more *complete and will achieve better results*.





IX. Your delivery should include appropriate gestures and emotions





- Some do not know what to do with their *hands*.
- Others remain *motionless in the same spot*.
- Make gestures that *make sense within the theme*.





- Your motions should be *natural and not contrived as if you were reciting a poem.*
- If you have a tic disorder, strive to weaken it, because you will find it *hard to prevent it while preaching.*



Some of the basic gestures



- The idea of greatness is expressed spreading the hands and arms.
- To go somewhere is expressed placing the right hand on the chest and extending it.
- If you wish to emphasize when you refer to God, raise one arm and point upwards with your index finger.





- The idea of extending is expressed by joining the palms of the hands about the height of the chest and spreading them out slowly to be leveled with the shoulders.
- To express offering something, lean towards your listeners with your hands up and lowering them a bit while you lean.





- When explaining something, keep your hands about 12 inches apart with your fingers spread out and the palms inclined.
- It is necessary that all of this be done **NATURALLY AND NOT SEEMING TO BE FABRICATED**, which can end up confusing and disconcerting.





X. Improve your pronunciation





a. Relax your jaw

- Some have a very tense jaw.
- Breathe deeply, and with your throat relaxed and your jaw dropped, say: “ah”, “ah”, “ah”.
- Repeat this exercise until you are able to keep your jaw from being tense.



b. Develop flexibility in your lips

Say the word “soup”
overextending your lips
when you say “sou...”
and bringing them back
at the sound of the “p.”



c. Develop nasal resonance

- Practice saying the words “singing,” “bringing,” “horrendous,” “band,” calibrating the tone in the nose and emphasizing the sound “nd.”
- Practice the letters “m” and “n” using the words “minimum,” “homonym” and others like them.





d. Take control of your breathing

- Stand up straight: your abdomen tucked-in, the chest out and your shoulders back.





- Breathe deeply in a controlled fashion and start pronouncing “ah” until there remains little oxygen in your lungs.



Conclusion



“When you speak, let every word be full and well rounded, every sentence clear and distinct to the very last word. Many as they approach the end of a sentence lower the tone of the voice, speaking so indistinctly that the force of the thought is destroyed.”





Words that are worth speaking at all are worth speaking in a clear, distinct voice, with emphasis and expression. But never search for words that will give the impression that you are learned. The greater your simplicity, the better will your words be understood.”

6T 383

