



# Northside Proclaimer

*Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord*

1 Thessalonians 1:8

**Northside church of Christ Welcomes You!**

**September 21, 2014**

## **“Actions Speak Louder Than Words”**

*Bryan Garlock*

Not one person reading this would disagree with the above title. In fact, it's even a biblical principle (cf. 1 John 3:18). One way our actions speak louder than words is when we drag in late, dismiss ourselves early from services, remain an absent body throughout the entire Bible study only to show up during services, or worse yet, refuse to show entirely.

Now that I have your attention let me give you my disclaimer. This article is not about those who are absent, come in late or must leave early because of an emergency, sickness, etc. This article is for those who do such things because of their lack of love for God and for others. While some do this unaware, it is necessary then to be reminded of common courtesy and consideration of others. This is no less a manifestation of love.

We must not neglect God's provision for corporate worship. Every aspect of our assemblies is vital to the Christian and his or her growth. Many believe we come together for the purposes of the Lord's Supper ONLY. This simply is a misunderstanding of what God has commanded. True, we are to assemble each Lord's Day to partake (Acts 2:42, 20:7), but this is not the only reason why we come together, as some promote. God has also commanded, for our good, praying (Acts 2:42), singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9) and preaching and teaching (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Let us not diminish any aspect of our assemblies lest we jeopardize our soul!

What of this matter of tardiness, early departure and absence? Bear with me as we lay down some obvious principles. Take school, for instance.

Everyone knows children cannot skip school, be late or even leave early. The school (and the government) has put regulations in place to dissuade parents from doing such things. In fact, there are consequences from the school (government) for the child and their parents if such is this case.

When children miss school for any reason they are automatically behind in their schoolwork. They miss important and life-changing lessons prepared by teachers for their class to hear and learn. School is required to better the lives of children so they can grow up to be a successful business man or a courageous fireman. When the child misses anything, just a few minutes of the lesson, they have missed it all. Further, a child will reap the consequences of tardiness, etc. with detention or possibly even suspension.

What of us? We are commanded to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Are we willing to miss any of the assembly to forgo such growth? Some of us seem to be. Like the teachers who prepare for school, what of the teachers who prepare for the Bible classes? Is their preparation in vain? May it never be. *Continued on back...*

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What of the adults? Are we allowed to be tardy to work each day? Are we allowed to leave work early? Are we bold enough to just skip work altogether? Are there not consequences to be considered?

When I was employed at Pepsi Cola, I had some of the best benefits offered by any company. In one year I topped \$63,000 selling soda. Yet, the company had rules and regulations in place to keep me from being tardy, leaving early and laying out. They called it the "point system." Each employee had ten points per year and was given a half a point for tardiness, a full point for early departure and a full point for missing work. Was I willing to throw away my salary and benefits by my lack of attendance? Absolutely not! Are some willing to put their soul in jeopardy for treating God and His assembly with such disgrace? Obviously so!

It amazes me how we can be on time and never miss school or work, but come the Lord's Day it's a different story. It would be almost funny if it weren't so shameful.

Now, let us discuss the issue of getting up and down. But first, my disclaimer. This paragraph is not for women with small children. This paragraph is not for those who become sick during services, medical issues, etc. This paragraph is for those who need to understand that when we get up, we potentially disrupt the worship of others (a point we will develop at a later time). Further, we must note that many times people are contemplating their condition with the Lord during the end of the assembly. So often many will get up during the invitation song to go to the bathroom or, even worse, leave the building. Not only is the act of leaving insulting to the Lord and others, those who do such things should consider how it may disrupt the minds of those who need to come to Christ in humble obedience: a lost soul on the verge, ready to walk forward to repent, confess and be baptized for the remission of their sins only to be distracted or stopped by others walking out. May it never be.

While we are on this subject of disturbance during the invitation, a quick word to those who make noise from their seats may be in order. I realize when the invitation is being given the preacher is about to end his dissertation. While this excites some, others are reflecting on the words just spoken and others are, as mentioned above, focused on their condition with the Lord. The quick stirs in our seats, the closing and zipping up of Bibles and grabbing of songbooks are very distracting to say the least. As the one delivering the message, I hear and see it clearly from the pulpit and am immediately distracted by all the noise and movement. If it is so of me, it is so of others. Let us be careful not to disrupt our brethren, or the lost, in any sense of the matter.

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7.21). Later He said, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me..." (Matt. 15.8). Even Jesus says actions speak louder than words. Brothers and sisters if we have been "slothful in zeal," then let us determine to "be fervent in spirit," and "serve the Lord" (Romans 12.11). It's time we "stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" when it comes to our service unto God (1 Cor. 16.13). BG