

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

October 7, 2007

Putting on Your “Sunday Best”

Curtis Thetford

When is the last time you heard that phrase? If you're like me, it has been quite some time; and if you take a look around at services, you'll see why. The phrase “Sunday Best” refers to that special set of clothes – be it a suit, dress or whatever – that was set aside and reserved to wear to worship services. It may have been ragged and worn, but it was still the best that a person had. There was a time when everyone had a set of “Sunday Clothes” – special clothes for a special day. Whatever happened to this tradition? One just has to look around at services to the various combinations of blue jeans, T-shirts, and tennis shoes and wonder if people are dressing up or down for worship services. When we look around and see children in shorts and sandals, one has to wonder if any special effort was made to prepare them for worship or if it is simply an interruption of their play time.

Now, in some communities and perhaps even for some in our community, blue jeans and a T-shirt might be the best some of us have; and if that's the case, then there is no problem with that. However, I suspect that for most of us we do have something better to wear if we so desired. When we prepare to come to worship we are not getting ready to go out to eat dinner, we are not going to the movies, we are not going out to play ball – we are going to worship God; and the way we go about preparing for that should reflect the importance we place on this event. Does the way we dress when we come to worship show our children, our neighbors, and ourselves that this is a very special time? Do our children simply view this as another family outing? When our neighbors see us piling into the car on Sunday mornings, is it clear to them that we are going to church, or could we just as easily be going out on a picnic?

Now don't get me wrong, I recognize that God is more concerned with what's in our heart than He is with our outward dress, and that if we worship Him in spirit and in truth we will be acceptable to Him regardless of what we are wearing. What I am concerned is that this change in Christians' attitudes towards dressing up for services may be a reflection of a change in attitudes toward the services as a whole. Coming to worship is not a casual event to be taken lightly. It requires special preparation, both physically and spiritually, so that we come to services properly prepared to worship God. Putting on our “Sunday Best” refers to much more than the clothes we wear. It encompasses to our whole attitude towards worship. David said *“God is to be greatly feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those who are around him”* (Ps. 89:7). Our reverence for God should show in every aspect of our worship for God, from our clothes to

our conduct in worship itself. Following is a list of things that can be important in properly preparing our bodies and hearts to worship God:

1. Get plenty of rest. – It is difficult to properly worship God when we're nodding off in services or when the children are fussy because of a lack of sleep. We start preparing for services on Saturday night when we plan our activities and schedule such that we are able to get in bed in time to be well-rested the next morning.
2. Take care of as much as possible the night before. – How many times is Sunday morning a stressful and hectic time because we are rushing around to finish a hundred things as we're trying to get ourselves and our children ready? By taking care of many of these physical preparations ahead of time – be it ironing clothes, bathing the kids, or filling up the tank with gas – we can be in a more relaxed frame of mind as we head off to services. By starting preparations the night before, we send an important message to our children about the importance of worship.
3. Study the bible lessons. – How important, yet how often neglected, is preparing for Bible classes by studying the lesson? It is important, of course, to keep up with our daily Bible readings, but Saturday afternoon is a good time to sit down as a family to review these lessons and complete any homework that is given by the teachers. We ask our children each day if they have completed their school work. Why not check to see if they have completed their Bible class lessons?
4. Pray. – It should go without saying that we should pray before every important event in our lives and worship is no exception. By finding some quiet time, either individually or as a family, to stop and pray before we go to worship God, we can begin to focus our minds on spiritual things and ask God for help as we try to please him with our worship.
5. Focus on spiritual things while getting ready. – It is hard to imagine being in a proper frame of mind for worship if we are watching TV, listening to the radio, or performing household chores while getting ready for church or in the car on the way to church. While we are preparing for this great activity, let's give it our full attention and remove all other distractions from our minds.
6. Allow plenty of time – What message do we send to our children when they aren't allowed to miss the school bus but it is OK to be a little late for worship? While it is certainly a lot of work to get yourself and a house full of children ready to go, we can all make it to church on time – if we would simply plan ahead and make that our priority. For most of us, services start much later in the day than either work or school, so there is no reason we can't be there on time.

So hopefully you can see that your "Sunday Best" is more than just that nice suit or dress. It is showing ourselves, our children, our neighbors, and God that the Lord's Day is the highlight of our week, and that it holds a special place in our lives. More importantly, it is an attitude that we are going to make the necessary preparations so that we can give God our very best each and every time we come to worship.

“Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.” – Psalm 102:25

Family News

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101-A at NHC. He has not felt well.

Nathan Fultz had successful surgery last week on his leg. See www.caringbridge.org/visit/nathanandsandlyn for details.

Allen and Cindy Malone will be visiting elsewhere during October.

Cotton Read is having trouble sleeping.

Laura Reed remains in room 103-B at NHC for therapy. She presently has some kind of infection.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: None known.

New Reports from men we support: **Sandro Corazza** (Rome), **Gary Hunt** (NYC), **Chad Lynn** (WV).

Note – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know. I will be printing it some weeks on Saturday night, so please get the news to me by then. Thanks! – Troy

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).