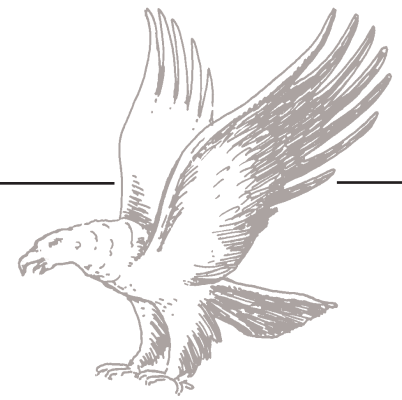


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



April 13, 2014

Quietness In the House of God

When we come together to worship God, it's not about us—it's about *Him*. And how we conduct ourselves during that time should reflect the awe and respect we owe Him.

“Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few” (Eccl. 5:1-2).

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In Solomon's day, “the house of God” referred to the temple, the grand edifice in Jerusalem where God's people came to worship Him. Today, Christians do not recognize any building as the dwelling place of God. Instead, God's “temple” is His people assembled in His name, wherever they might be (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:20-21; Matt. 18:20).

With that distinction in mind, Solomon's advice regarding going to the house of God still holds an important lesson for us today when we gather to worship God. When we come into God's presence, Solomon advises that we “walk prudently.” Other versions read “watch your step” or “be careful.” He is not telling us to avoid tripping in the

foyer or to stay away from back-stabbing brethren (although either can be an issue in some churches). Rather, he is reminding us that we are coming into the presence of the almighty Creator, and must not treat the occasion lightly.

This principle is particularly appropriate to our *words*. When we draw near to God, Solomon says, it should be “to hear.” We are in the presence of God, who is in heaven; therefore, “let your words be few.”

Yet too often, instead of listening, our worship consists of “the sacrifice of fools”—words spoken rashly or in haste (v. 2). For example, if we come before God to tell Him about *our* desires, *our* needs, *our* troubles, *our* concerns, we're missing the point. God already knows all that. Maybe our problems wouldn't be so burdensome if we would just be quiet and let God tell us how to respond to them with greater patience.

Or even worse, if we approach God to thank Him for making us so righteous that we are not like other men, then our pious prayers will rise no higher than the ceiling. Like the proud Pharisee, we've

lost sight of our proper place; “we do not know that we do evil.”

When we come together, our goal should be *to hear God speak* rather than to inform Him. We should listen to His word read and expounded; hear songs of encouragement; follow prayers of praise and adoration; be reminded again and again of the indescribable love of God displayed in His Son. We are in the presence of God; be quiet and listen!

But doesn't worship require words? Certainly, but *listening* must still be the primary emphasis. The preacher must deliver words that prick honest hearts; the prayer leader must speak words to which all can say “amen”; and when we join our voices in song, shouldn't we be *listening* to the words we are singing?

In any human relationship it's hard to learn anything if we are the ones doing all the talking. Effective communication requires careful listening; how much more so in our relationship with God! There is so much we could learn from Him, but we can't learn unless we close our mouths, open our ears, and quietly listen with reverent hearts.

— David King