



## **Cape Coral Church of Christ**

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

(239) 283-4880



<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

## **Schedule of Services**

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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## **What You Do in the Church Pew Matters!**

“You mind your business and I’ll mind mine.” That is the motto of many, and I, for one, like it! The Bible teaches us not to be busy-bodies. At the same time, we need to remember that what we do has an impact on others for good or bad. One of the reasons that God has us to come together in an assembly is to provoke one another to “love and good works” and to exhort those around us (Hebrews 10:24-25).

What you do in the church pew matters to the preacher. He shouldn’t assume that you are sleeping just because your eyes are always closed, or that you don’t care just because you don’t bring your Bible, or that you are not paying attention just because you play with the baby in front of you during the sermon. However, those who look at him and nod in agreement or disagreement with obvious interest, turn the pages of their Bibles, and especially say “Amen” every now and then are much more encouraging! One preacher said it was like saying “sic ’em to a bulldog!” You can be a Eutychus when the preacher goes till midnight.

What you do in the church pew matters to your family. Mommies and daddies do good when they bring their children to Bible class and to worship. They do even better when they show them by example how to behave in worship. Over the years, an obvious pattern has manifested itself. Parents who don’t bring their Bibles and participate have children that don’t

bring their Bibles and participate. Parents who don't sing have children who just sit in the pew and don't sing. Dads and moms who are distracted and disengaged from the worship have children who must constantly be entertained or disciplined. For those families, the pew is a boring bench that must be endured for an hour. Paul told us to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

What you do in the church pew matters to everyone else in the audience. You take a section of the audience that has many individuals who are timid about singing and place in their midst an individual or family that makes a joyful noise and just watch what happens! Zeal for the worship of God is contagious! Which assembly is more edifying; twenty souls with everyone participating to their fullest or one hundred souls with half just taking up space in the pew?

Most importantly, what you do in the church pew matters to God. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

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## Five Questions about Inner Space

You may have heard of a couple of astronauts who were stuck in outer space and couldn't return to earth until someone picked them up. They had a long time to wait for a ride home! Man has always been interested in the place we call "outer space." But for all of our progress trying to conquer the "final frontier," there is another frontier that needs even more work and exploration: Inner Space!

In Acts 5:1-6, the Bible gives a case where a man and a woman failed to conquer their own inner space, and it led to their destruction. In confronting Ananias and Sapphira, Peter alluded to five questions relevant to our inner space: the heart, that must be answered by us all.

**"Why has Satan filled your heart ... ?"** The Bible gives us a clear answer on this: Because he is the father of lies (John 8:44), because he is your enemy (1 Peter 5:8), and because he is the enemy of Christ and the church (Rev. 12). In order to conquer inner space, we must resist Satan's temptations (James 4:7).

**"... to lie to the Holy Spirit ...?"** Can we deceive God? No, because nothing can be hidden from Him (Eccl. 12:14). Ananias and Sapphira failed to realize that lying to the apostle was in effect lying to God, and the Holy Spirit, because of the authority they carried.

**"... and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"** Greed and selfishness can destroy us. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the apostles and the church to believe they sold the land and gave the entire proceeds.

They wanted recognition for the gift, but to profit financially as well. To control our inner space, we need to beware of the love of money (1 Timothy 6:10) and refrain from our desire to be seen among men (Rom. 12:3; Matt. 6:2).

**"... was it not your own ... was it not in your own control?"** The offering was a "free will" offering. There was no set amount commanded (2 Cor. 9:7). Rather it is what we "purpose" in our inner space, our heart, that is important! There was no reason to lie, but their inner space was out of control.

**"Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?"** The simple fact is, Ananias and Sapphira made the plan in their own hearts, and executed it because their inner space was out of control. Their hearts were not right with God (Acts 8:22). In their hearts, they hatched the plan (James 1:14-15).

Of all the frontiers, "inner space" is the most difficult to tame. Jesus says sinful actions come from within man (Mark 7:20-23). We can't tame the heart on our own. Instead, we need the word of God (Psalm 119:9-11).

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## **Spiritual Warfare**

We have all been touched in some way by war. Earthly conflicts, or the threat of such, have affected every generation since civilization began. Scripture tells us that those who try to win souls for the Lord are engaged in spiritual warfare. Here are some "rules of engagement" to keep in mind as we share the gospel with the lost.

### **Identify your enemy.**

Our adversary in spiritual conflict is the devil. Satan has deceived the lost and is either holding them captive or has convinced them to follow him willingly. We must remember that our enemy is not the person we are trying to save. Too often we treat the Bible studies we conduct as hand-to-hand combat that we can win by proving we are right. Let us show compassion to the lost and allow God's Word to show them how they can be liberated from their captor.

### **Know your objective, and have a plan.**

Our objective is to show a captive that their freedom has been purchased, and to show them how to gain that freedom. To accomplish this, we must do whatever it takes in a person's life to move them closer to a relationship with God. First, we learn where their heart is, then we formulate a plan that will allow us to help them move forward.

### **Be prepared.**

The Bible tells us specifically what equipment and training we need in order to be prepared for this conflict (Ephesians 6:10-18). If the Lord is

not our defense, we may become a casualty of this war, so let us strengthen our faith. The power of God's Word and the power of our prayers are the weapons that will defeat Satan. If we submit to these preparations as God has instructed us, the devil will flee the battlefield (James 4:7)!

**Be willing to give your life for your Commander.**

A good soldier not only obeys orders, he is willing to put his life on the line to see that those orders are carried out. We may never be called upon to die for the Lord, but we will not be effective in carrying out our mission if we are not willing to give up our comfort and pleasure for the cause. How vain and petty do our excuses sound when compared to the torment of a soul lost for eternity because we were unwilling to carry out our mission?

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## **Incline Your Ear**

“Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:2).

My wife and I have raised four children. One of the things we learned as a parents is that children are easily upset. Because of their immaturity and short-sightedness, they fret about things of relatively little consequence, at least from my perspective.

But how do you suppose I reacted when my children were devastated by some in-significant matter, from my perspective? Did I tower over them from my 6' 6" frame and tell them to get over it? Of course not! I would kneel down, get on their level, and offer comfort, understanding, and perspective.

I say that to say this: while doing a word study last night on the word, “incline,” I learned that it meant “to turn toward,” “to bend down.” The significance of this doesn’t surprise me, but it reinforces what I already know about the God I serve. He is a good God, a loving father, who shows compassion on his children.

From God’s perspective, the things that upset me and discomfort me must be trivial. However, he doesn’t tower over me as “God Almighty,” telling me to get over it. No, He “inclines” his hear toward me. Or to say it another way, he bends down toward me as a loving father would, to hear, sympathize, and help me with my concerns, as trivial as they may be.

Friends, have you ever felt all alone? Have you ever wondered if there was anyone who understood what you are going through? Do you feel like there is no help or hope for your situation? If so, may I remind you that you serve a loving and compassionate Father who is willing to incline his ear to your prayers.