



Worship Manners Matter By Pastor Ken Ediger

I have attended many formal and informal public gatherings – sports events, contemporary concerts, courtroom hearings, musicals/plays, classical concerts. Each seems to have a code that delineates expectations for social behavior according to the nature of the gathering. Sometimes the rules of behavior are formally expressed, such as *Concert Etiquette* that our music educators try to instill in musicians and audiences. Other times the rules are unwritten, but expected nevertheless.

As a community of Christ that gathers regularly for worship what behavioral expectations are appropriate? This is a difficult issue to address because of so many variables. Yet, if we have “rules of etiquette” for other gatherings (as we should) how much more should we be striving for appropriate decorum in the corporate worship of the living God.

My intent is not to prescribe those rules. Rather, I would like to begin a discussion in our households that extends to the church as a household.

“Manners” is another term often used for appropriate aspect of social interaction. Emily Post, an expert on American etiquette, said, *“Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use.”* That seems to me to be a good place to start – a sensitive awareness of the nature and feelings of others in the worship service. Using church etiquette shows that you respect God, other worshipers and the person conducting the service. It is also a way to ensure that everyone present at the service gets to enjoy the service and learn the message that is being presented. Everyone, including children, can use proper church etiquette. Worship can be enhanced or contaminated depending on the behavior of the audience. I hope that our discussion will upgrade the worship experience for everyone.

To get the conversation started look at a common description of Concert Etiquette:

As the audience, you are an important part of tonight’s concert. The audience’s responsibility at formal concerts is to honor the efforts of the performers by providing a listening atmosphere in which the performance can be appreciated by everyone. To that end, we ask your cooperation with these few requests:

- While the performance is in progress, remain seated and quiet. (If it becomes necessary to leave the auditorium, please do so between musical selections).
- Please stay for the whole show (less than 90 minutes in total). All performers deserve a full audience for their performances. Listening to other / better players is a big part of each student’s Music Education.
- If young children become restless and disrupt others’ ability to listen, please take them from the auditorium until they are quiet.
- Trips to the bathroom, to get a drink, etc. should be made prior to the start of the show or at an intermission.

(Article continues on page 4)



SHEEP SHAPE

By Pastor John Wiker



Will You Believe God?

Imagine you're sitting in a Sunday school class – or a small group Bible study and the leader asks ... *do you believe God and what He says about you?* All the people in the group nod their heads in agreement. However, when the meeting is over and the “*practical realities*” of life begin to press in ... there is often a different response.

The life of Abraham gives us some idea of what it truly means to “**believe God.**”

God promised to give Abram and Sarai his wife a son.

- She was barren and both were too old to have children.

God promised to make him the father of offspring so numerous they couldn't be counted.

Abram believed God ... he didn't look at the “impossible circumstances” ... or listen to critics who would tell him it couldn't happen.

He believed God ... and what God said ... regardless of the circumstances.

Read and reflect on this story ... (may I encourage you to slowly ponder the truth – allowing the Holy Spirit to give His insight to your heart)

God's Promise - Genesis 15:1-6, (NIV '84), “After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” But Abram said, “O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

God's Answer - Genesis 21:1-7, (NIV '84), “Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

God's Test - Genesis 22:1-18, (NIV '84), “Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.” Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.” Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

(Article continues on page 4)



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I was given a wonderful gift this semester, the opportunity to participate in a Sunday School class rather than be the teacher. For the last 11 years I have always been the leader of the class rather than the student. This semester I realized that I needed to be a student again and with the help of some wonderful people I have had the chance to do just that. It has been very good for me to be able to participate in the Grace Based Parenting class. I would encourage all parents to get involved in the next class in the series, not because you may agree with everything that they present, but because it helps you think about how you parent and why you parent that way. It has also been good to have other parents to talk through the information with. We live in a world that makes parenting a very tough job and we need all of the help and encouragement we can get. I would highly recommend and encourage all parents to jump into the next class that is offered.

I am excited to tell you that we will have 32 high school students and adults attending our Mennonite Brethren National Youth Convention in San Antonio on April 15-19. I would ask that you be praying for our trip and for the messages and times of service to make a huge impact on all who attend. Many who have attended in the past mark this event as a big spiritual marker in their life.

I am also excited to let you know that we have a team of 22 from our church family who will be making the trip to the Dominican Republic this July 8-15. Please be praying for this team as they are in training and preparing to go on this trip. Also pray for them as they talk and write to family, friends, co-workers, classmates, and others to raise the funds to go. If you would like to help one or more of these people go on this trip with financial help or would like to pray for one or more of these people, please pick up a yellow sheet in the gathering area. Please pray that this team would be a blessing and an encouragement to our missionaries Sarah Liborio and Ruth Castillo, as well as the people in the villages who will receive the water filters.

I would also like to ask for your prayers as we continue to study the life of Christ on Wednesday nights. Pray that we can learn to trust Jesus more and more as we learn who Jesus is and why He is worthy of our honor, worship, and our lives.

Worship Manners Matter (continued from page 1)

Concert Etiquette continued:

- If you enjoy what you see and hear, please clap enthusiastically; at no time is yelling nor whistling acceptable at a formal concert.
- Please turn pagers, cell phones and watch alarms off.
- Thank you for making this evening enjoyable for the performers and for the audience.

A Canadian pastor offers a corresponding Worship Service Etiquette:

As the congregation, you are an important part of today's service. The congregation's responsibility at a worship service is to honor the One whom we worship by worshipping and providing an atmosphere where others may also worship. To that end, we ask your cooperation with these few requests:

- While the service is in progress, remain seated and quiet. (If it becomes necessary to leave the sanctuary, please do so during transitions in the service).
- Please stay for the whole service (less than 75 minutes in total). Our Lord deserves our full participation for the entire service. Also, our participation in worship encourages others who are just learning to worship.
- All persons; children, youth, adults, should be careful not to hinder or disrupt other peoples' ability to worship.
- Trips to the bathroom, to get a drink, etc. should be made prior to the start of the service or after the service.
- If you are blessed by what you see and hear, praise the Lord enthusiastically. Saying an "Amen!" or "Praise the Lord!" is welcome.
- Please turn pagers, cell phones and watch alarms off.
- Thank you for making this service enjoyable for everyone in the congregation.

Now that the conversation is started, keep it going. Send me an email with your thoughts at kediger@northoak.net . Thoughtful written responses sent to Lori Balzer at lbalzer@northoak.net will be published in a future newsletter.

Will You Believe God? (Continued from page 2)

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

The Attitude of Belief - Hebrews 11:17-19, (NIV '84), "By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."

God hasn't changed and He still keeps His promises!

Abraham believed God instead of the prevailing opinions of people / impossible circumstances.

- The question is ... will I believe God – and His promises – in spite of the "impossible" .
Or will I choose the opinions of my friends and the culture of the day? The choice is yours ... choose wisely!

From the Elder/Deacon Board

The Elder/Deacon board met with the Finance Team on Tuesday, February 22nd to review our current budget and financial status. At our annual business meeting last June, God lead the congregation to increase the budget by approximately 14%. We gratefully report that giving in this fiscal year has increased by 4.8%. However, expenses are up 15% over last year. We continue to hold expenses below the budget. Yet, to date, the amount given is approximately \$20,000 below expenses.

In order to be good stewards of our resources, the Elder/Deacon board recommended that the Finance Team request ministry teams to continue to show good stewardship by limiting discretionary spending for the rest of the fiscal year that ends on June 30th. We want to be mindful of the blessings that the Lord has shown us and want to thank you for your continued support of North Oak's mission and ministry.

Leadership term adjustments

The Elder/Deacon Board acted at its February board meeting to adjust the terms of two elders and one deacon to provide continuity and stability on each board, as provided by NOCC bylaws. Currently, the terms of all the elders and all but one deacon expire at the same time, causing a potential lack of continuity and void in experience when new boards are formed June 1. The Board approved to reduce the terms of Elders Will Fadenrecht and Bob Barnhart and Deacon Cindi Wilson to one year, ending in 2011. Each of these individuals can run for another term if they chose to do so.

The nomination process has begun and we request your prayerful consideration as God calls leaders into service for the next year.

NOCC is hosting the upcoming Tabor College Concert Choir on Friday, March 25, at 7:00pm at NOCC. You can be part of this mutual blessing in one or more of the following ways: host 2 or more choir members (provide transportation after the concert, breakfast & transportation back to the church Saturday morning), provide a salad or dessert for the Friday evening meal to be served at NOCC, or sponsor a pizza for the meal for \$8. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Normadine Noone at nnoone@ruraltel.net or 628-6041.

Square One Saturday

If you have been unable to attend the Square One classes offered in January and are interested in finding out about what NOCC is all about, join us for "Square One Saturday," March 19th from 9:00am-12:00pm. Light breakfast snacks will be provided. You will learn our history, core beliefs, confession of faith and have questions answered about NOCC.

We will also receive new members on April 3rd. Testimonies to be heard on March 28 and 30 at 6:30pm.

The Living Last Supper Drama Coming to Hays

This Easter season experience the last day of Jesus Christ's life on earth through the "Living Last Supper," a drama with music, written by Dr. Ruth Vaughn, and directed by Naomi Jantz. The drama will be presented on Saturday evening, April 9, 2011, at the Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center on the campus of Fort Hays State University. Music will be provided by the nationally known and highly respected Christian singing group, the Daybreak Quartet.

This meaningful and moving production is being brought to Hays by the Bucklin Area Ministerial Alliance along with the Hays Ministerial Alliance. Doors will open at 5:45 p.m. with a concert by the Daybreak Quartet starting at 6:30. The drama will begin promptly at 7:15 p.m. Seating will be on a first-come basis.

The production is sponsored by local businesses and individuals so that anyone wishing to attend may do so at no cost. The cast and supporting members represent many different churches from Bucklin, Kingsdown, Minneola, Cimarron, and Dodge City.

In this drama set to music you will witness Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room, the washing of the feet, the Last Supper, the revealing of the traitor Judas, Jesus in the garden speaking to the Father, and his appearing to doubting Thomas after the resurrection. The drama concludes with the disciples and Christ freezing in the position of Leonardo daVinci's painting of "The Last Supper."

All through this drama there will be beautiful music by the Daybreak Quartet. Sound and lighting will be provided by Segue Sound Company, Garden City.

Please join us for a meaningful and moving production of the "Living Last Supper" on Saturday, April 9, 2011 at the Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center, Fort Hays State University beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The Daybreak Quartet will be leading worship at NOCC on April 10th and all Adult Sunday school classes are invited to a concert in the sanctuary by The Daybreak Quartet during the Sunday school hour.

NOCC Calendar Reminders

<u>Date</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>When</u>
March 5	Brandon Heath Concert @ Beach Schmidt	7:00pm
March 12	Christian Challenge Spring Show	7:00pm
March 14	Servant Community	6:30pm
March 19	Square One Saturday	9:00am-12:00pm
March 25	Tabor College Choir Concert @ NOCC	7:00 pm
March 28 & 30	Testimonies time for new members	6:30pm
April 3	New Members Received	8:30 and 11:00am
April 9	Living Last Supper	6:30pm
April 10	Daybreak Quartet lead Worship	8:30 and 11:00am
June 13-17	Vacation Bible School	9:00am-12:00pm
July 8-15	DR Mission Trip	
August 5-7	So. District Conference in Norman, OK	

2011 Christian Challenge Spring Show at FHSU

FHSU Christian Challenge invites you and your family to their Spring Show Saturday, March 12th at 7:00pm at Beach Schmidt Auditorium.

A Glimpse of Heaven! By Rachel Ediger

"I learned lots of new facts about heaven." Tanner---"I learned that there are 12 gates"—Alex – "its gates are each made of one complete pearl" Cameron --"because Jesus is there, it is day all the time...no night!" Joshua A. –"the gates are never closed" Christian – "the river of life comes from God's throne" Kourtney –"I think it's cool how wide the walls are and that it is square like a cube" Callie –"the city is like a square" Will –"Jesus is THE WAY to heaven" Josh.

These are some of the Biblical facts that the HFL 5th graders learned about heaven. We hope you will enjoy taking a look at their heavenly mansions displayed in the gathering space. We let our imaginations flow with ideas of what our "place" in heaven might look like (imagination, because the Bible doesn't give descriptions) we also did some Bible digs to learn facts that are recorded for us to know about the Holy City. Take a look for yourself in Revelation 20 and 21. Consider our memory verse, John 14:6 with us and be sure that you know the way to be a citizen of Heaven. "Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father

Vacation Bible School

A wonderful event for children is held every summer here at NOCC. It is Vacation Bible School where we have lots of fun, teach children eternal Bible truths, share the gospel of salvation, and reach out to people of the community. This year's VBS will be held June 13-17 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. It is for all children who have completed Kindergarten through Grade 6.

To run a great program like this which reaches around 100 children, we need lots of volunteers: teachers, classroom helpers, and people to work with crafts, snacks, game time, the nursery, music, drama, decorating, registration, and audio/visual and sound. Last year about 60 volunteers were involved with VBS.

Here are some testimonies from last year's workers:

To me, there is nothing more exciting than planting seeds and leading a child to Christ! I begin preparing several weeks ahead and watch in amazement as God gives me ideas for ways to creatively engage my students in learning about God's unconditional love for them through Bible stories. He never fails to provide me with insight into how to make the gospel clear and the memorizing of Scripture fun. And VBS music is simply irresistible! After preparing, I love to watch God work throughout the week and call His children to Himself. Thanks NOCC for letting me have the privilege of sharing Christ through VBS. -- Sherrill Weeks

I have been fortunate to teach the kindergarten class in VBS the last 2 summers. It is absolutely wonderful to see the kids learning about Jesus and the Bible and, at the same time, just having a blast! VBS has provided a wonderful opportunity for me to get closer to the kids, the Church and God! In addition, I feel like I am really making a contribution to the Church and to the community (since some of the kids do not attend NOCC). VBS is a wonderful way to get involved and feel enriched! -- Mary Martin

We want you to pray about where God would want you to help. Corina Beam, Mary Martin and Will Fadenrecht will be directing VBS. You can contact them for more information or to volunteer. Be watching for more details about VBS.



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NOCC Cooks receive big thanks from FHSU Students!

Over 32 NOCC "Cooks" help with a special ministry to FHSU students every Sunday night—preparing SUNDAY SUPPERS!! For the last three years college students have gathered on Sunday nights to enjoy a home cooked meal—served with a love in a NOCC home. These meals have become a yummy way for Christian students from several congregations to gather and fellowship and bring friends to a welcoming home setting. Big thanks go out to the host homes, and all the cooks who faithfully fix the meals. Students had this to say to the hosts and cooks! "This meal, every Sunday, is such a blessing to me. Your hard work provides extra study time for me and the food tastes great. I never leave hungry! Thank you so much!" "Thank you so much for taking the time to serve us. It is greatly appreciated. Sunday Suppers not only taste great, but they also open up so many opportunities to invite non-believers to a family style community where Christ can be seen!" "I look forward to having a home-cooked meal every Sunday night. Thanks so much!" "Deeeeear Cooks, You make me and my tummy veery happy! I look forward to the meals every week. It's always a great opportunity to bring friends that wouldn't normally go to a different event. I hope God blesses you for blessing so many others :~!"

If you would like to help prepare food for Sunday Suppers, give Rachel Ediger a call (628-3435).