

Good Worship Manners

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The God we worship in our assemblies is not a God of confusion, but One who wants everything done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:33; 40). Perhaps with a little more consideration for this principle, for others, and for our own behavior, we can improve our “worship manners,” for example:

1. **Arrive a few minutes before time to begin (Bible class or worship).** Unexpected occurrences can cause anyone to be late occasionally, but some are consistently late for a very simple reason: They wait too late to start getting ready. Anyone can overcome consistent tardiness if he or she makes an effort. Late arrivers always cause some distraction.
2. **If you arrive late, wait until there is a pause between activities to enter** (i.e., between songs or between a prayer and a song, etc.). If the class or sermon is underway, enter and take a seat as unobtrusively as possible.
3. **Watch and follow the song leader.** It frustrates the song leader and distracts other worshipers when one or more singers drag a word or two behind the leader. With a little attention to this matter, our combined voices can be one voice of non-distracting praise.
4. **If you have a baby and it begins to cry, take it from the auditorium.** I would never knowingly say or do anything to discourage parents of little ones from bringing their babies to worship at the earliest possible age. I deeply admire and encourage those who do. However, when an innocent babe (or a toddler who is old enough to be disciplined) starts to scream, it should be taken out promptly, thus keeping disturbance of the assembly to the minimum.
5. **Do not leave before the closing prayer unless it is unavoidable.** Also, do not let your children parade in and out unless it is necessary. Be sure they take care of their water and rest room needs **before** Bible class or worship begins, and help them understand that they will leave the assembly only for an emergency or for correction of misbehavior. Every person who leaves during any part of the worship distracts others.
6. **Read appropriate Scriptures during the Lord’s supper** (e.g., Mat. 26:26–27:28; 1 Cor. 11:23–29; Isa. 53) if your mind tends to wander. Prepare your contribution check or cash **before** you come to worship, rather than doing this during the Lord’s supper — a distraction both to you and to others.
7. **Stay awake.** Some are on medications that cause drowsiness, but for most of us, retiring at a reasonable hour Saturday night will help. Besides bringing your Bible, some find it helpful to bring paper and pen and to take notes on the class or sermon, besides following the study in the Scriptures.
8. **Sincerely sing the invitation song** and refrain from distracting behavior during its singing (e.g., talking, putting on your coat, etc.).

9. **Put your cell phone in “vibrator” mode, or turn it off.** Those who have received a call or have heard others receive calls on “live” phones during worship know how completely distracting (and embarrassing) this is.

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