

THE HOME TEACHING REVERENCE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

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Irreverence in public worship services of the Lord's church today should be considered as one of the tragedies of our generation. It is tragic in that the irreverent: **does not engage in worship, hinders those in the same general area in their attempts to worship, and many times hinders the overall worship by distracting and discouraging others who are worshipping or leading in worship.** Obviously, you cannot look at an individual and determine whether he or she is worshipping acceptably in God's eyes, but, there can be serious doubts concerning the attitude and participation in worship of those who: play, talk, court, blow bubble gum, play with children, fix finger nails, write notes, etc.

Why Do We Have the Problem of Irreverence?

The problem of irreverence may exist for a number of reasons. The irreverent:

1. May not understand what worship is.
2. May not realize the necessity or value of worship.
3. May not be aware of who is being worshiped.
4. May not know how to worship.
5. May not understand the meaning of reverence.

Whatever the reason, irreverence is a manifestation of an unconverted heart, and the individual should be lovingly taught whatever is needed to make up the spiritual deficiency.

What Can the Home Do Concerning Irreverence?

Teach the proper concept of God. Jehovah God is the creator of all and is the sustainer of all life (Heb. 1:1-3). God desires for His creatures to live eternally with Him in heaven (John 14:1-4). To make this possible, He gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for man (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9; Heb. 10:1-12). In this we learn the undeniable fact that God is love (1 John 4:16)! These facts alone should be sufficient to motivate any creatures of God to love, honor, and adore the God of the universe. There is, however, another characteristic of God which should be taught; it is the justice of God. The Word of God points out man's choices; and, where his decisions will lead him. Deluded is the man who believes he can turn his back on God's way and be acceptable to Him at the judgment. When the home instills in children the love and justice of God, a knowledge of what the sinner's salvation cost God, and that all good gifts are from our heavenly Father (Jam. 1:17; Eph. 1:3), it will go far in creating a feeling of dependence and reverence toward the God of heaven.

Teach the proper concepts of worship. It is almost a universal belief among members of the body of Christ that worship is gathering with those who are worshipping.

Acceptable worship unto God does not simply involve assembling with worshipers or participating in certain outward acts. Acceptable worship must be in spirit and truth (John 4:24). The apostle Peter points out in 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Each Christian is a priest and must offer his own worship (as a priest) unto God. This worship **must be** in spirit and truth (John 4:24), and it **must be in a spirit of reverence**. No one can worship for you! Acceptable worship demands that the worshiper participate in the acts of worship with the inner man.

Develop and nurture within children the characteristic of reverence. Reverence is defined as honor or respect felt for or manifested, and profound respect mingled with love and awe. When we instill in our children the proper concept of God and worship, it will go far in explaining the who, why, and how of worship. While there is a certain level of respect, honor, love, and awe which we exhibit toward our Creator and Him alone, there is a measure of respect (reverence) that individuals should have toward themselves, life, and their fellow man.

The individual should respect himself as the temple of the Holy Spirit, one who has been bought with the precious blood of the lamb (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The same respect should be exhibited toward life itself, for it gives the opportunity to serve and glorify God (Mat. 5:16). Respect (reverence) for our fellow man is also needed, for how can we have the proper relationship with God and not respect His creation? This attitude of respect should be developed in each area of our lives and will contribute to our all important relationship with God.

The home should provide periods of worship in which individual family members can practice the principles which have been gleaned from God's Word.

Parents, in the home situation, should encourage their children to be reverent during public worship and guide them to sit with their parents or close to the front of the auditorium where they will not be tempted to participate in irreverent activities.

Conclusion

The home can do much to improve the reverential attitude in the public worship service of the church. As parents, let us do our best to train our children in this very vital area of worship, and be a reverent example in worship unto God.~