

## WATCH YOUR STEPS

Scripture reference: Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools. Ecclesiastes 5:1

Coaches have all kinds of slogans about practice and games. Trainers have the same number of slogans for reaching goals. How we prepare for something tends to affect how it will show up on game day. I can say the same thing about how we approach going to church.

How do you approach going to church on Sunday mornings or whatever days your church may offer a worship service? We used to only think about going to church on Sunday mornings and maybe again on Sunday nights but nowadays some churches are even offering Saturday night services. Do you wake up on Sunday and decide on that time whether or not you will attend church that morning? Or perhaps decide the night before whether you will set your alarm so you can go or just wing it and say if I wake up in time I will go?

When Solomon was writing Ecclesiastes, he penned the verse "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools." (5:1) He meant for us to watch our steps as we proceed to worship. We need to walk with reverence, we need to forward with dignity and respect. Remember how God told Moses to take off his shoes as he approached the burning bush? Moses was standing on holy ground. We need to approach going to church to worship the same way as Moses did the burning bush. Not barefooted but with a reverence for being on holy ground.

As little kids, we were probably often told to not run in church. Now as adults, are we still "running" while we are at church? It would no longer be with our feet but with our thoughts and focus. Instead of truly spending time in worshipful behavior, do we spend the time focusing on what we have to do later that day or perhaps that week? Do we listen intently or spend our time checking out what everyone else is wearing or looking at our phones? We may be sitting still, but we are running as fast as we can while we are there.

Most of us make a mad dash in the morning to get to church. We hurry up to get there, then we are in a hurry for it to end so we can hurry up and leave. We feel good about ourselves because we went to church. A lot of times, I bet we can't even remember what scripture was read, what songs were sung, or even some of the key points from the sermon. There are 168 hours in a week and we resist focusing for 1 hour while we are in church.

It is truly amazing that God continues to put up with our foolishness. God is love and that is why he does it for us. Perhaps we should take our worship time a little more seriously because God deserves it. The next time you are getting ready for church, take a moment to say a prayer asking for the ability to be led by the worship service. When you approach the service, do so reverently and expect to experience the presence of God. Be prepared for God to stir up our souls, truly change our lives, and satisfy our search for meaning in our lives. Come in a way that you are anticipating a memorable experience with God. I promise you won't be disappointed.