

# Three Minute Messages

The proposal is that a group of preachers, teachers and others gather. Then various speakers deliver three-minute messages. This is a way to provide many presenters the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts for the benefit of those assembled. They have a chance to practice their craft. The hearers have a chance to be blessed in a mixture of ways. It is like going to a covered dish dinner. There is plenty for all. The meal may not have the harmony and unity of a carefully planned banquet. But none go away hungry.

This innovative way of bringing together the saints for mutual edification is admittedly different. It is not as predictable as the traditional church service. There is a risk that one or more speakers will say things that are not totally biblical. However let us hope that the audience has a measure of spiritual discernment. Let us trust that God will honor the many prayers of the speakers and those assembles. Let us not allow fears to keep budding preachers and teachers from being used by God.

Most sermons and Sunday school lessons are for 15 to 45 minutes. That is more than three minutes. This is not an attempt to discount or discredit that form of communication. And note that such messages are often made up of three main points. Each of these points contains sub-points. The points and sub-points rest on a key verse. The truth(es) of that key verse needs to go into the heart of the hearer. This exercise can assist a speaker in building longer messages.

Let us look at this form a few other views. A preacher or teacher is often asked to just share a few words with a group as a visiting minister, guest as a dinner or other public setting. Also there are the hospital visits, phone counseling sessions, and teachable moments with those who are eager to grow spiritually. Here is a way to equip them with a collection of "spiritual snacks" for such occasions.

Let us be honest. Many folks avoid going to church because they do not like to be bored by the sermon. And if we are brutally honest most of us have endured our share of boring sermons. May I suggest that part of the problem is that the preacher wanders all over the place. Yet a three-minute format forces him to focus. He can literally write it out word for word and rehearse it repeatedly. He can test it on willing individuals. He can make minor and major changes. It can become like a smooth and polished stone. This can be compared to the soloist that practices singing the same some many times in order to get it just right. When this is done well an entire congregation can be moved.

For those who have the courage let me point out that we live in a society that is saturated by the media. The news is presented in quick sound bites. The music videos have dozens of flashy clips that jump across the screen. The newspapers and magazines have scores of tiny articles all jumbled together. If you look in the library at editions of these publications ten and twenty years ago you will notice a large contrast. The world does not have the answers to the spiritual questions that plague the soul of every human. But they do serve up their lies in an appetizing way. The sage advise in this scenario is to hold to the biblical message while adapting the methods. This is especially true in reaching the younger generation.