

The Public Reading of God's Word

Paul gave instructions on church ministry in his letters to Timothy. Paul said in I Timothy 3:15, "*...I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth*" (NASB).

One area in which Paul gave instruction was in his encouragement to publicly read the Scripture: "*Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching*" (I Timothy 4:13, NASB).

Does this instruction to publicly read the Word mean church leaders should only read one or two verses and then quickly move on to another part of the service? Or does it mean to give "time" to publicly read a long section, or an entire chapter or two, of the Word?

The public reading of the Word is a wonderful opportunity for elders to minister in front of the congregation. This would allow the church to know the elders and see them fulfill the spiritual exercise of publicly reading the Word.

It would also be wonderful to have leaders of the church, and even young people who are being trained in ministry, participate in the public reading of the Word. While reading, the reader could even give a few comments on the passage to explain and increase understanding.

This exercise would encourage the congregation to actually follow along with the reader while holding Bibles in their hands, not just read Scripture displayed on a screen.

Nothing is said about musical worship in Paul's two letters to Timothy, but much instruction is given regarding the Word of God. Rather than music being the main focus of a church service, the Word should take priority. Most of the service time should be given to the reading and preaching of the Word with the addition of only one or two great songs of praise and worship.

Paul said to Timothy, "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following" (I Timothy 4:6, nasb).