

# WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES: Interim Services for Churches Between Ministers

Newsletter, July, 2007, #13  
by Jerrie Barber and John Parker

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## How Should We Treat the New Preachers? #3 Matthew 7:12; Ecclesiastes 7:10

(In three newsletters, I am including my notes from a sermon I preached at Berry's Chapel, March 11, 2007. I hope the thoughts helped the Berry's Chapel congregation, Wes Gallagher, Andy Baker, and will help others who might profit from these ideas. I appreciate many preachers who responded to my e-mail invitation to participate in this.)  
Jerrie W. Barber

- A. From a preacher who served as an "unintentional interim."
  - 1. Let the new preacher have a part in funerals and weddings. Many say, "I just don't feel close to the new preacher." The new preacher may be a contrast from one you have known over a decade. The way you feel close is to let him be a part of your life – joys and sorrows. I preached in a congregation where we had a funeral about every three weeks. In the first two years, I had a funeral and a half. I never became the preacher for that congregation. I was always an outsider.
  - 2. Don't expect to have the same relationship with the new preacher that you had with the previous preacher after several years.
  - 3. "The old people like for you to look them in the eye, call them by name, shake their hand, and tell them you missed them if they were absent the previous Sunday."
    - a. "Do you know why I don't do that? I don't know their names."
    - b. "How are you coming with that?"
    - c. "I am learning about one a week. In ten years, I will know everyone's name if we don't have anybody to be baptized or place membership. However, I have noticed that when someone invites me to eat with them, it improves my memory. Please tell them – if they are in a hurry for me to know their names – how my memory works."
- B. Application.
  - 1. Wes cannot have the same friendship with you that you had with Chad after seven years.
  - 2. Andy will not have the same familiarity with people that has taken me fourteen years to develop.

3. Both Wes and Andy may do better and be more effective than Chad and me.
  4. But don't be disappointed that they are not us.
- C. From a preacher who has had a good transition and is happy in his relatively new position.
1. Suggest that they endeavor to keep their love affair with the preacher up-dated to the present. Some are always stuck on someone who is now gone and fail to appreciate or encourage the current servant. It will help the new guy if they do not fill him with how great the predecessor was . . . all the time . . . and quote the former minister all the time. It helps too if the other guy knows to move on and not be hanging around all the time. If he can't wean himself, the people have more difficulty.
  2. A series of cards to the new family in the interim between the decision and the arrival is always encouraging too. Then the cards, with assurances of support and prayer do not have to stop, for years to come.
  3. It is helpful if the local people remember to extend the "honeymoon" by continuing to do the things they did to lure the man to come and to make him feel welcome initially. A happy marriage works that way. Eventually there is comfort in being able to take each other for granted to the extent that there is assurance of compatibility and sincere commitment on the part of both. Until that time comes, reassurance is always helpful. The "little things" mean a lot initially.

Conclusion:

- A. I have learned from the preacher's side not to take offense to the misstatements that people make.
1. I have had the opportunity to serve when people resented and rejected me before they knew me; it was nothing personal because they did not know the person of Jerrie Barber.
  2. A friend here at Berry's Chapel told me recently that when he first saw me he said, "I'm not going to like him."
  3. He is now a good encourager and helper.
  4. Jerrie, I have a cute illustration for you. You might have seen the fellow in (our town) Ellijay that rides the funny looking bicycle. He came to worship one Sunday night and as he was leaving he told me, "You'd make a better politician than you do a preacher"! I had to ask that he repeat the statement, "You'd make a better politician than you do preacher." "Thank you brother, but why do you say that?" His reply was, " 'Cause I heard YOU preach!" Some things are hard to forget. I would love to have the outlines if you could email them. I will celebrate my 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary (here) at Ellijay the first Sunday in February. Give our love to Gail and the kids. Your brother, Butch.
- B. How should you treat the new preachers?

1. Like a Christian should treat anyone.
  2. It comes from our habitual relationships. Mark 12:29-31
- C. Do you love God?
1. Have you shown that in action? 1 John 5:2,3
  2. Do you need to do that today? Mark 16:16; 1 John 1:9
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### Shakespeare Quotations for Ministers, by John Parker

O this learning, what a thing it is!

TAMING OF THE SHREW. 1.1

Comment of an uneducated person. This can be used genuinely or in satire.

Old fashions please me best; I am not so nice

To change true rules for odd inventions.

TAMING OF THE SHREW. 3.1

Suggests attitude of not changing tried and true for new ideas and ways

O, I am undone, I am undone! While I play the good husband at home, my son and my servant spend all at the university.

TAMING OF THE SHREW. 5.1

A lament of the father of a college boy.

Your eyes must with his judgment look.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. 1.1

Advice to a young person to consider a parent's wise advice.

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### Smile of the Month

The father had watched his teen-age daughter go through a series of outlandish young hair styles. The latest fizzled fad, however, was too much for him, and he decided on a father-daughter talk.

"First of all," he said sternly, "your hair looks just like a mop."

The daughter looked bewildered, "What's a mop?" she asked (*Wish I'd Said That*, by Cleon Lyles, page 101).

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### Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

When I was going through a difficult time several years ago, a friend recommended books by Barbara Johnson: *Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy*, *Spashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life*, *Pack Up You Gloomees in a Great Big Box*, *Mama, Get the Hammer!* *There's A Fly On Papa's Head!*. I have found them helpful and entertaining.

The following quotes are from *I So Glad You Told me What I Didn't Want to Hear*, by Barbara Johnson, published by Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas, Copyright © 1996 by Barbara Johnson.

“I had to give up jogging for my health . . . My thighs kept rubbing together and setting my pantyhose on fire!” (page 11).

“How is it that you can gain two pounds by eating a half a pound of fudge? (page 18).

“If we say a situation is hopeless, we are slamming the door in the face of God. Instead, we have to be like the little boy who stood so long at the top of the escalator, watching intently, until someone asked him what he was doing. He patiently replied, ‘I stuck my chewing gum on that black hand rail, and I’m waiting for it to come back!’ ” (page 103).

“Dr. Karl Menninger, the world-famous psychiatrist . . . was answering questions after giving a lecture on mental health when one person asked, ‘What would you advise someone to do if he felt a nervous breakdown coming on?’ ”

“Most people expected the doctor to say, ‘Consult a psychiatrist.’ Instead he said, ‘Lock up your house, go across the railroad tracts, find someone in need, and do something to help that person.’ ” (page 118).

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## Barber Clippings

Jerrie Barber

Our work continues to go well in Eddyville. We finished Vacation Bible School Wednesday night. A Family Meeting is scheduled for Sunday night to begin working on a time-line of the Eddyville congregation and a self-study. This will help us to see where we have been in the last forty six years and what kind of preacher will be helpful at this time. We also will discuss the best time for an elder-deacon training class.

I have had the opportunity to consult with two congregations during the month on topic where they thought I could be helpful.

I will be in a meeting at the Dorris Chapel congregation near Trenton, Tennessee, July 22-25, and at the Upper Sinking congregation in Hickman County, Tennessee, August 5-10.

I recently had my series on how to handle church problems (*How to Survive the Storm and Still Enjoy the Sunshine*) transferred to CD's. They are now available in cassette tape and CD for \$30.00 plus postage. The topics are: “Why Do We Have So Many Problems?”, “What Situations Can Contribute to Conflict?”, “Can Good Communication Help Solve Problems?”, “Why Am I Often Disappointed in Leaders?”, “How Many Should Be Involved in Solving Problems?”, “How Can Leaders Cultivate Trust?”. If these would be helpful, e-mail me and state if you would like them in cassettes or CDs, give me your address, and I will mail them and include an invoice.

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Personal note: Jill and I spent a pleasant week at Pepperdine's symposium on a cappella sacred music. Scholars and singing groups from several countries and traditions affirmed and demonstrated the quality and beauty of a cappella singing. I leave June 19 for England to join with Dr. Paul Seawright in continuing to photograph sites associated with the great British hymns.

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