

WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES: Interim Services for Churches Between Ministers

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Jerrie Barber and John Parker

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Tell Me What You Need by Jerrie Barber

In my early ministry, I had a policy of visiting the sick. I visited those in the local hospital every day, twice a day if they were very sick, and three times a day if they were dying.

When one of our members was having surgery, I tried to be there before the doctor gave the “happy shot” and have prayer with the patient. I waited with the family during the surgery. When the person came back to the room, I returned for another prayer and left.

I don’t know where I learned those rules. I thought that’s what a preacher was supposed to do.

When I was living in Dalton, Georgia, an elder was having surgery the following week. His wife said, “My husband is having surgery Tuesday and I would appreciate it if



you would *not* come and sit with us at the hospital during his surgery. I will have my *Reader's Digest* and my children will be with me. I get nervous during times like that and I don't want to have to entertain someone else. Are you going to be in town Tuesday?"

I replied that I would.

She continued, "If something bad were to happen – which we don't expect – would you come and be with us at that time?"

I said that I would. She said she would call if she needed me.

This has been one of the most helpful conversations to me for practical ministry and communication. I wondered how many people I had aggravated by staying with them all day when they had rather I had been somewhere else.

Since then, in my early weeks of a new ministry I discuss this principle: ask for what you need. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1 Corinthians 2:11). I don't know what you are thinking unless you tell me. You don't know what I am thinking unless I tell you.

People have different needs. In sickness, some want visits. Some want no visitors. Some want elders and preachers. Some want certain people. It is helpful to everyone when this is communicated and believed.

Recently at Colleside, where I am working now, a good sister came to me after the service and told me what she wanted: "When I have surgery, I want you to visit and I want you to bring chocolate. I am not planning any surgery in the near future. When I do, you won't have to remember what I have told you. I will remind you."

That's good communication!

Shakespeare Quotations for Ministers, by John Parker

Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
"This is no flattery; these are counselors
That feelingly persuade me what I am."



Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,

Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

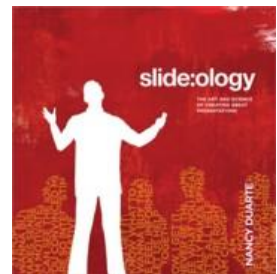
Duke Senior commenting on the advantages of living in the forest as opposed to the court.

As You Like It 2.1.

Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

Slide:ology – The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations, by Nancy Duarte, Copyright © 2008 Nancy Duarte

If a slide contains more than 75 words, it has become a document. You can either reduce the amount of content on the slide and put it in the notes, or admit that this is a document and not a presentation (page 7).



The audience will either read your slides or listen to you. They will not do both. So, ask yourself this: is it more important that they listen or more effective to read (page 7)?

When you cause depends on empathy to move people to act, using the most compelling images is important. Using photos that are raw and real will motivate an audience to become involved. Dig through as many images as necessary to find the ones that elicit an emotional response (page 78).

Quite possibly how slides are arranged has the most impact on whether a slide's message is visually clear. Arrangement tells a story. Based on the arrangement decisions a designer makes, a slide can prompt feelings of tension, confusion, and agitation; conversely, it can maximize clarity by employing the following:

CONTRAST

The audience can identify the main point quickly.

FLOW

The audience knows the order in which to process the information.

HIERACHY

The audience sees the relationship between elements.

UNITY

The audience perceives meaning from the location of elements.

WHITESPACE

The audience has visual breathing room (page 92).

Create dominance with some elements and practice restraint with others. Force yourself to make a decision about the priority of the information.

It's laziness on the presenter's part to put everything on one side (page 93).

A common mistake presenters make is assigning contrast unintentionally. Virtually any stylistic difference between two elements suggests something to the viewer on either a conscious or subconscious level. Unintentional contrast can confuse the intended message at best, and contradict it at worst. Remember, all stylistic choices have the potential to suggest importance, urgency, and value. As a result, you should base all such choices on a well-defined purpose (page 95).

Inexperienced presenters often think whitespace is expendable – especially when they need to incorporate unwieldy amounts of content that's "too important" to be distilled or simplified despite its cumbersome density. After all, whitespace by definition carries no information, so what's the harm in filling it up? The harm is that audiences find these slides difficult to comprehend. Whitespace is as much an element of a slide as titles, bullets, and diagrams. In large part, the use or misuse of whitespace determines a slide's effectiveness (page 106).

Ask yourself whether your message can be processed effectively within three seconds. The audience should be able to quickly ascertain the meaning before turning their attention back to the presenter. For comparison, consider that when billboards first appeared, a public outcry ensued over concerns of driver safety and visual pollution of the landscape. Interestingly, relatively few protests have aired against the visual pollution in meeting rooms across corporate America (page 140).

The decisions you make while animating objects influence how quickly the audience can process the information but just as importantly, how much the audience has to move their eyes to process the information. Text dropping down and then bouncing into place is bothersome and not meaningful. Plan out what pacing makes sense, where objects will travel, and where the object is at in the space. Sometimes using more than one animation feature helps convey a story better (page 188).

It's tough to find a good use for many of the custom animation features in PowerPoint. You need to pretend they aren't there (page 200).

Just because your slides look great does not mean they convey useful meaning (page 233).

Smile of the Month



A man decided to become a monk, and joined an order where silence was the cardinal rule. He could say only two words once every decade.

After ten years the head monk called him in. “Well,” he said, “you can say your two words now.” The man replied, “Food cold,” and left the office.

Another ten years passed, and this time the man said, “Bed hard.”

Again another ten years, the man was once again summoned into the head monk’s office. “I quit,” he said. The head monk replied, “I’m not surprised. You’ve been complaining ever since you got here” *Reader’s Digest*, October, 1979, page 132.

Barber Clippings

I enjoyed our first Family Meeting. People were rushing to sign up for the tasks that need to be done to prepare for the next preacher. We had our organizational meeting of the Transition Monitoring Team. Other groups are organizing and beginning to work on the self study and time line.

Next week, we have the initial meetings of the class, *Learning to Love my Friend(s)*. This is a ten-session Bible study and training program on how to be better friends to others as Jesus is a Friend to me. The elders, staff, and spouses will be participating in these first classes. We will meet from house to house, spending two and a half hours each night. We have three groups ready to start: a group of ten and two groups of twelve.

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John Parker

Jill and I will attend the Ascending Voice II symposium on a cappella singing in worship at Pepperdine University May 12-15. I will read a paper on Reginald Heber, author of "Holy, Holy, Holy." The symposium invites groups and individuals from widely varying religious traditions who share this common commitment to a cappella singing. Some of the nation's most well known Biblical scholars and music specialists attend. During June 14-25 I will host a Lipscomb University alumni tour to many of the hymn sites in England featured in my book with Paul Seawright ABIDE WITH ME: A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY THROUGH GREAT BRITISH HYMNS (2009). (Please see my website www.abidewithmehymns.com.) I will speak on the hymns and hymn sites at the Germantown Church of Christ on July 28.

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