**Reading the Bible in Public**

***—Preparing, announcing, reading with expression***

Public reading of the scripture is a regular practice in many churches. The person given this duty should take it very seriously and prepare for it well. Most of the pointers on this page also apply to reading a passage of scripture during the courseof preaching a sermon.

***1****Preparing to Read*

* Read the passage privately in various translations, not just the one you will use in public.
* Choose key words and phrases to help you graspthe main ideas.
* Pencil mark the passage: underline words to be stressed, and put a stroke / for pauses.
* Practice reading aloud until you can read confidently and with expression.

***2****Announcing the Reading*

* If you are reading, but not doing so as part of a sermon or short talk, then don't preach, just read—keep any introduction down toone or two sentences.
* Announce the place in the order that people will turn to it —book, chapter, verse. To say, "The fourth chapter of Romans verse ten" is confusing, because people have to transpose that order into the natural one they use.
* While people are turning to the place, look over the first sentence so as to start well.

***3****Reading With Expression*

* Put emotion into your voice by feelingwhat you read.
* Put stress on the right words (you shouldhave underlined them).
* Pause in the right places (you should have marked these with a stroke).
* Use changes of volume, pitch, and pace.
* Stand naturally erect, not stiff, and not stooped. Use appropriate gestures and body language.
* Use eye contact. Let your mind read ahead of your lips (this takes a little practice). While your lips catch up, look at the audience.
* Place or hold your Bible so that you can keep your head up. A head jerking up and down is very disconcerting. It may also affect the sound from a microphone, alternating loud blastswith muffled voice.