**Platform and Pulpit Manners**

Adjective - osten­tatious

1.Characterized by or given to pretentious orconspicuous show in an attempt to impressothers:

an ostentatious dresser.

2.(of actions, manner, qualities exhibited, etc.)intended to attract notice:

1. Dignified propriety of behavior, speech, dress, etc.

2. The quality or state of being [decorous](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/decorous), or exhibiting such dignified propriety; orderliness; regularity.

3. Usually, **decorums**. An observance or requirement of polite society.

[Merle L. Mills](https://www.ministrymagazine.org/authors/merle-l-mills)

*The Platform*

Decorum on the platform and in the pulpit can do much to set the tone and establish the mood for the church serv­ice. It is important that the minister as well as others who participate in such services observe the ethical conduct that should prevail under such circumstances.

Because those who are on the platform are under constant observance, their mannerisms should be such as not to offend the worshiper or to detract from the service. While an osten­tatious display is to be deplored, one's conduct before the public should not be considered lightly.

Let us consider some of the essential points of this subject and ascertain whether we are doing all that is expected of us to inspire a reverential atmosphere and to establish a setting that will contribute to the efficacy of the service of worship.

1. Those who are to go on the platform should meet in a designated place, usually the pastor's study or the program chairman, in sufficient time to become ac­quainted with the order of service,
2. The pastor can plan with the organist or pianist to be given a signal when the prelude is about to start.
3. Inconspicuous and conservative dress is essential to good platform etiquette.
4. Proper dress for local church officers who are called upon to participate in the services can be stressed by having a meeting with your elders and deacons at the beginning of the year in which is discussed with them the impor­tance and necessity of dressing on the Sabbath day in an attire that would be in keeping with the dignity of the service.
5. Posture is also an important factor to be considered with platform manners. One should sit erect with both feet on the floor. To sit in a slouched position with the legs crossed is a gross impropriety.
6. All those on the platform should partic­ipate in the offering. This too is a significant part of Our worship to God.

Admittedly, one of the prevailing sins in our churches today is irreverence. What is seen and heard off times in the house of prayer is an insult to God and must cause the angels to hide their faces. We stand indicted, and as conference workers and leaders we ourselves have been guilty of contributing to this laxity by our personal example. Realizing our solemn obligation, could we not improve our platform manners and by example help to develop an atmosphere that will dignify our church services so that they will inspire awe and reverence in all who come to worship God in His sacred presence?

***The Pulpit***

The pulpit is the most sacred and exalted place in the church. He who occupies this position stands as the representative of Christ. This is the minister's first line of offense. From this honored and dedicated place he boldly denounces sin and courageously challenges the devil. From the sacred desk are heard the truths of God, which cut as a two-edged sword, bringing both conviction and contrition to the worshiper. Words of life and death flow from this fount. To this vantage point the penitent looks for the heavenly balm of Gilead. Is it not important then that one's comportment in the desk give no cause for needless offense and bring no reproach against the name of Christ?

Here are a few suggestions that should be followed as we stand in the pulpit:

1. The occupant of the desk should have good posture. He must not stand in a slouched posi­tion, leaning over or on the desk. He should stand erect, with both feet on the floor. To stand first on one foot, then the other, and to lean on the desk does not impress the congrega­tion that the speaker has any fire and enthusiasm or that his message is of any great import.
2. Jesting, joking, and telling gruesome stories are out of order in the pulpit. It is not the place to display one's humor and make people laugh. There is a time and place for wit and genuine humor, but seldom should it be used in the pulpit. If done at all, it should be with moderation and restraint.
3. Announcements that are made from the desk should be in keeping with the spirit of the service. **Those who make the announcements should do so briefly and concisely**. The worship service is robbed of its dignity when an an­nouncement is made and someone speaks up from the congregation to make a correction, or when the pastor or local elder who makes the an­nouncement speaks directly to someone in the congregation, requesting a clarification or additional information.
4. Prayer offered in the pulpit is formal in style. To use the personal pronoun—you, your, et cetera—*in addressing God certainly sounds disrespectful*. Our prayers need not be ster­eotyped or flowery, nor should they be informal or crude. They should be simple and uttered in true prayer form.
5. Public prayer need not be long. The invo­cation prayer should consist of but a few sen­tences. This is also true of the offertory prayer and the benediction. The main prayer is longer, but even that should not be protracted. *There are few occasions when the main prayer should exceed two or three minutes in length.*

Long public prayers are unacceptable to the children, and do little good for the adults. "The prayers offered in public should be short and to the point. God does not require us to make the season of wor­ship tedious by lengthy petitions. . .

1. The call for the offering from the desk can be done with dignity. To resort to lightness and humor in calling for the offering is sacrile­gious. We stand in dire need of solemnizing, beautifying, and embellishing this part of our church service. A few appropriate remarks are in order, stating clearly what the offering is for that day and quoting a brief statement from the Spirit of prophecy or the Bible that would encourage and inspire the people to participate in this phase of the service. *The deacons are then asked to wait upon the congregation as they worship the Lord with their tithes and offerings*. **The call for and the receiving of the tithes and offerings are as sacred and essential a part of the service as the prayer, and should be .done with as much thought and care.**

Our denomination does not believe in or follow a liturgical form of church service. This is as it should be. God is to be worshiped in spirit and truth. We are not required to follow a punctilious ceremony in approaching God. **But we must not go to the other extreme and permit the church service to degenerate into an informal, ill-planned, and undignified service**. When we come into God's holy temple and He speaks through His servants in the pulpit to the people, it is an awesome and solemn occasion. We should therefore beautify and exalt the service and conform to an accepted standard of ethics and procedure where His name is wont to be proclaimed and praised.

Our attitude, mood, and demeanor in His house, especially on the platform and in the pulpit, will have its influence on the degree of reverence and inspiration that will prevail in the service.