

# AUDIENCE WITH GOD

## **(First 5 minutes) Radical Hospitality"**

"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Romans 15:7)

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)

Some things to think and pray about:

- Who was the first person to greet you at church when you started coming here? How did it make you feel?
- What was the last time you felt awkward somewhere, and someone helped you feel at ease?
- When was the last time you tried to do the same thing, for someone you didn't know?
- Pray for increased awareness and hospitality to strangers, by both yourself and the rest of the congregation.
- Pray that those who may have not had good experiences return or find God's love and acceptance wherever they are.

## **(Minutes 6-10) Passionate Worship**

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2)

In the book "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations," it talks about how without passion, worship becomes dry, routine, boring, predictable, and keeping the form while lacking the spirit.

Something to think and pray about:

- How are you involved in the Church? Are you passionate about your contributions, or have they become strictly out of duty? What causes of the Church are you passionate about?
- Pray that anyone who may have lost passion in their contributions be renewed in spirit, knowing they are helping to spread God's love and message.
- Renew your commitments as service to the Lord and for spreading his will.

## **(Minutes 11-15) Intentional Faith Development**

"As we mature in Christ, God cultivates in us the fruit of the spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) These are the qualities to

which the Christian aspires; these are the qualities God's spirit forms in us as we deepen our relationship with God through Christ." (Five Practices of a Fruitful Congregation, pg. 64 paragraph 4)

- How do I hope to grow in Christ?
- Am I actively working toward faith development, or hoping for it passively?
- What step can I take right now to commit or recommit to faith development?

#### **(Minutes 16-20) Risk-Taking Mission and Service**

"A small rural church with an average attendance of just over thirty people received a visitor one Sunday, a mother with a young child who had significant special needs. The child required nearly round-the clock medical care and oversight. At first, some of the members were put off by the dramatic depth of the family's needs and disturbed by the attention the family drew. Slowly church members began to see in this family's presence a distinct call of God to help. Before long the congregation "adopted" them into their life, and adult members were trained to help care for the child so the mother could occasionally restore her strength. The few children already in the church befriended the newcomers, and the men from the church alleviated the accessibility issues in the adopted family's home. These acts changed the mother's life and also transformed the life of the congregation." (Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, Pg. 93 paragraph 3)

- Have I paid attention to needs of others that might need help?
- Have I made it a personal priority to serve others?
- Pray to be able to recognize those in need, and that you as well as others in the congregation may rise to the challenge of "risk-taking" mission and service.

#### **(Minutes 21-25) Extravagant Generosity**

"Here's what the devil knows: if he can get you in debt, he can make you a slave. If he can convince you to spend all you have, you'll never offer your tithes to God, never help the poor as you could have, and never use what you do have to accomplish God's purposes. If he can tempt you to become a slave to creditors, you will not know simplicity, generosity, or joy. He will have neutralized your effectiveness for the Kingdom and choked the gospel out of your life." (Enough, p.22, paragraph 4)

As we prepare for the upcoming Stewardship Sunday, contemplate on the following:

- Am I using my resources to accomplish God's purposes, or self-gratifying purposes?
- If I am in debt, how can I simplify my life so that I may know the joy of generosity?
- Am I trusting that God will provide if I donate my "first fruits?"
- Pray for strength and self-control for yourself, your family, and the congregation. Pray for willingness to increase your giving to further God's purposes.

#### **(Minutes 26-30) Your choice, and during the final moments:**

"I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. " (Psalm 59:16)