

5 More Rude Things People Do in Church

J. Lee Grady last week compiled a list of the “Top 10 Rudest Things People Do in Church.” He mentioned talking during a service, texting or surfing the web, sleeping, clipping fingernails during church (I’ve actually seen this one and it grossed me out!) and six other pet peeves you probably agree with.

His list got me thinking—and asking others—about rude behavior in church. I asked some of my Facebook friends to chime in on some of the rudest things they’ve witnessed during Sunday morning worship services. The responses were troubling and indicate a sign of the times we live in, where, in many cases, the Word of God being preached is no longer revered.

Here are some of the most interesting responses:

1. Eating Pop-Tarts (or other food) during service. I understand that some people have blood-sugar issues or other problems, but I am hard-pressed to believe that most of the people noshing on breakfast foods during morning worship are prediabetic. In our rushed society, many may not get up early enough to eat breakfast before church. Some are bringing food from the church cafe into the sanctuary. Nibbling on a cracker is one thing. Having your morning meal is quite another. This is inappropriate. We should be focused on eating a spiritual meal or else step outside to snack if we can’t make it through the service. With regard to people eating the Lord’s supper (communion), Paul wrote: “Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” (1 Cor. 11:22).

2. Eyeballing the opposite sex with lustful eyes. Many people meet and fall in love in church. That’s awesome! But the church is not a meat market. People should be able to go to

church without being gawked at with lustful eyes. Based on some of the comments I saw on Facebook, apparently the sanctuary isn't always a safe place for women pursuing God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Of course, with some of the outfits women wear to church these days, it's hard to put all the blame on the guys. The Lord says, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

3. Heckling the pastor. If you are in a church that deals with recovering alcoholics and homeless people, you are bound to have at least one guy who heckles the pastor—or at least hollers out with inappropriate answers to rhetorical questions from time to time. They don't know better, but ushers need to be properly trained on how to deal with this and other disruptions so that the word of God can go forth unhindered.

4. Tapping you on the shoulder when you are deep in worship to scoot by you and find a seat. How annoying! You are crying out to God over a deep issue in your life and on the verge of a breakthrough when Johnny Come Lately barges in, bumping into you as he tries to find a seat next to his buddy (who's eating his breakfast on the third row).

5. Coming up behind you and laying hands on you suddenly. I'm all for the laying on of hands, but having a stranger who just clipped his fingernails—or who just heckled the pastor, or who disrupted you during deep worship—deciding to lay hands on you without permission is beyond rude. It can be sort of creepy. Even if they weren't eating Pop-Tarts or engaging in any of the other rude behaviors mentioned, it's still creepy for someone you don't know to pounce on you and begin praying in some strange tongue.

Here are a few other pet peeves folks mentioned about rude behavior they see in church:

- Not showing up at all because you find out the senior pastor isn't preaching

- Clipping coupons
- Treating those less fortunate like they don't belong there
- Being unfriendly
- Digging up their nose (yuck!)
- Constantly looking at their watch
- Mocking the way someone worships
- Making fun of people singing on the platform
- Passing notes back and forth
- Conversations across pews
- Clapping and shouting so loud during prophetic words that you can't hear what's being said
- Talking about how someone's weave looks

The list goes on and on. Yet some of my Facebook connections were upset that I asked the question. One commenter said it was judgmental. Another said it wasn't edifying. Still another said the person sleeping in church could be having a prophetic dream. I think they are missing the point. Church is not a place to clip your toenails—or your coupons. Church is not a place to lust after the opposite sex. Church is not a place to catch up on your meal planning.

God is gracious and merciful, much more than we are about distractions. But here's the bottom line: When the Word of God is being preached, respect should be offered as if Jesus was standing there Himself. It's not about the messenger or what he is wearing or what his hair looks like. It's about the message. We should pay attention to the Word of truth, especially in this hour when deception is rising, instead of texting our friends, passing notes, whispering about what we're going to do when the pastor finally finishes preaching, or talking about somebody's hairstyle.

Lost souls who don't know better, well, they don't know better. But church members who come in every week need to be gently corrected. After all, Jesus warned us to be careful how we listen: "Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has,

to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him" (Luke 8:18). When we're in church, we need to remember why we're there. We need to cut out all the distractions and focus on the Lord—and we need to be respectful of the people around us whose lives may depend on the Word being preached. Amen.

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