

2. Inform your contact of your decision!

3. If your decision is "no," forget about it and go on to something else. If your decision is "yes," then begin to develop a heart and mind set conducive to preparation of the message(s) you are going to bring.

II. Secondly, let me share with you SOME OBSERVATIONS REGARDING ACCEPTANCE OF OFFERS OF HOSPITALITY

- A. Many times hospitality (sometimes dinner; sometimes dinner plus entertainment for the afternoon if you are speaking both morning and evening; sometimes extended accommodations) will be offered. What should you do about this?
- B. Ordinarily it is a gracious act to accept an offer of hospitality, and I certainly believe that such offers, when made sincerely and in the spirit of Christian love, are very pleasing to God.

I do not believe that such offers, when made insincerely or grudgingly out of pressure (such as the pastor pressuring someone to take you), or of routine (as in the expression, "I had the last preacher; it's your turn this time!") or of necessity (as in the expression, "No one else has volunteered; I guess we're stuck with him!") -- I do not believe that such offers are pleasing to God. And they are usually unpleasant for the speaker as well!

- C. I have made it a practice not to accept hospitality (however sincerely offered) unless I am far enough from home to make two trips in one day unfeasible. Usually this means more than one hour away.

Now you may disagree with me. But I have found that four hours of relaxation in the afternoon makes me much better prepared to preach on Sunday evening than six tiring hours of trying to accept from and provide entertainment for the good people who have invited me. As Charles Haddon Spurgeon is credited with saying: "A nap on Sunday afternoon makes a man a lion in the pulpit on Sunday evening!"

Again, you may disagree with me, and I permit you to do so!

Of course, there are factors in my situation which may not be present in yours. For example, I am married and live in my own home. When I drive back from a church in the afternoon, I am coming back to my own family and my own home. If I were single, I am not sure that I would wish to come back to an empty room, to no dinner, and to no family.

Also, I enjoy driving. Some people do not enjoy it. It makes them weary or nervous or gives them a headache.

And some would prefer to be with people on Sunday afternoon. People stimulate them. People recharge their batteries. People do not tire them.

Then too, I am growing older. I do not have as much energy as I once had, at least for certain activities. (Interestingly, I find that although I have less energy for certain things, I have more staying power for certain other activities than I had twenty years ago).