

LAMPLIGHTERS INTERNATIONAL – DISCIPLE-MAKER TIP #22

TITLE: "SETTING THE TONE"

Gifted speakers know the first two minutes of a speech or sermon are often the most important. Why? The speaker either catches the audience's attention within the first two minutes or their attention is lost and it's usually hard to get it back.

The same principle is true for the discipleship Bible Study leader. If a Bible Study leader manifests a *laissez faire* approach (French from *laissez faire* – to let [people] do [as they please]), doesn't start on time, and doesn't get into the lesson right away, he (or she) is speaking volumes to the group members. Unfortunately, the leader is sending the wrong message.

The leader should begin the lesson time by 1) greeting everyone warmly, 2) opening in prayer, 3) reading the related Bible passage and, 4) jumping right into the lesson. By approaching the Bible Study in this way, the leader emphasizes the importance and seriousness of studying God's Word together and lets the group members know that he wants to hear what each person has learned in their personal study time. The leader who wastes 5-10 minutes at the beginning of the study (yes, I meant to use the word "waste") actually robs the class members of precious time they need to share what they have learned and to learn from each other's spiritual insights.

Remember: The primary goal of a discipleship Bible Study is building (disciples for Jesus Christ), not bonding. As a discipleship leader, set the tone early in the discussion time. Start on time and move right into the lesson. God will use His Word in a powerful way to change lives (building) and the fellowship of learning (bonding) will be a precious by-product of seeing lives transformed for His glory.

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