

AN ORDERLY CONVENTION

Br. Ted Smith

Those in charge of convention arrangements know that AN ORDERLY CONVENTION is dependent upon three important considerations. First, there must be a willingness to exercise self-discipline on the part of all of the brethren. Second, there must be a strong sense of reverence to our Heavenly Father. Third, there must be a clear recognition of the demands of the Golden Rule.

A Chairman has the duty to keep order, and part of that order is to start meetings on time, and meetings should be closed on time. There may be exceptional circumstances that would release the Chairman from these duties, but these exceptional circumstances would generally be apparent to all.

All of the brethren have a duty to be in their seats and quiet by the time the minute has arrived for a meeting to start. We have a duty to show respect for our Heavenly Father in "the house of God." We have a duty to the Chairman to cooperate with him so he can perform his duties faithfully. (There are exceptional cases, as we all know, for brethren to come in late, but they should take their seats as quietly as possible.) We have a Golden-Rule obligation to the speakers to give them the full time for service as allotted to them on the convention program. Incidentally, brethren who give opening prayers, should use self-control and not unduly trespass upon the time of the speakers.

A Bethel service is no exception to the rules governing AN ORDERLY CONVENTION. We should listen with reverent attention, for all the words of OUR MORNING RESOLVE, the VOW and the DAILY HEAVENLY MANNA are holy in import, and we should not show disrespect by casual attention or inattention.

Brethren who are not present at the meetings, but are outside in the vestibule, have a solemn duty to keep their voices and laughter completely subdued so there will be no disturbance to the conventioners who are present in their seats and who are attempting to hear what each speaker is trying to say. A closed door to a meeting place does not give those in the vestibule the liberty to carry on loud talking and laughter.

Those in charge of seating, sometimes decide that certain seats should not be used, and barriers are erected to indicate the seats that are to be used and the seats that are barred from use. These barriers should be respected and never torn down, unless permission is obtained from the person in charge of seating arrangements.

No speaker has the right to run over his time as indicated on the program, without express

permission from the Chairman or from the congregation. It is true that certain brethren are more gifted than others, but this abundance of talent does not give them the right to disobey the rules any more than any of the lesser talented brethren.

We have been provided with clear and unmistakable teachings on DECORUM in the house of God; and we would benefit greatly by a review of this subject occasionally. An article entitled DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD is found on reprint page 5186.