**Preparing to preach.**

Training for authorised worship assistants June 2015

(Notes from Sally)

1. **Immerse yourself in prayer.** Give prayer time. Ask God to speak to you

2. **Immerse yourself in the passage.** Read. Study. Are there any difficult questions which arise from it. What is your response to these questions?

Make notes on the bible passage for its own sake before and spectate from your sermon notes

WORD ONLY - DRY UP

SPIRIT ONLY - BLOW UP

WORD AND SPIRIT - GROW UP

3. **Get into the shoes of your hearers.** What is it that God wants to say to them through the passage. What sort of communication will make it easier for them to relate to your message and take it on board.

* What will the message say?
* What methods of communication work best for your hearers? Would they find visuals helpful? Would they benefit from an interactive style? Are they seeking something which has rigour and evidence in terms of biblical study?
* What do you hope the message will **do?**

ie what difference will it make to your hearers thinking and acting

You may wish to make a list of stories and illustrations which you plan to use. If possible, include some personal stories as this helps you to be real.

4. **Design the message**

Bring your bible notes and your list of illustrations together. In your final sermon notes underline key points (max of 3 key points). Also you may wish to highlight key stories, illustrations and bible quotations.

Practise - deliver it out loud to see how you tell the stories and if it works - also to check the length.

Think about style - what works for you and your hearers?

**5. Deliver the message**

Be real. Be yourself.

70 percent of communication is non verbal. People will notice whether you live by what you say. They will respond to your passion.

Keep to time - longer is seldom better.

6.  **Look for the fruit.** Listen to people’s responses in order to a) help them in their walk with God

b) to improve your own preaching

KEY PRINCIPLES IN TEACHING GOD’S WORD

1. Teach with Authority, (Faith does come from hearing God’s word 2 Corinthians 5.19-20)
2. Teach with Simplicity. (It is not about showing how clever you are)
3. Teach with Repetition. (Most people don't take things in after hearing only once. What is your “Big Life Message”?)
4. Teach with intention - Seek and expect a God to use your message
5. Teach on the platform of a Holy life (Every minister has to battle with temptations like every Christian - especially money, morals and pride. The battles are won in the secret place - in prayer)
6. Teach with Love (Pray for a heart for your congregation. Your compassion will speak louder than your words)

**AWA Preaching – Training Session – June 2015**

**(Notes from Dawn Davidson)**

Preaching is a living developing ministry – like most things in ministry (or life!) we never stop learning...

Preaching may or may not be your particular love – but goes with the territory of AWA/ reader/clergy ministry – we can learn techniques etc and we will grow as we step out in obedience to God’s calling.

Remember God will use what is offered prayerfully in faith!

**Input – become a sponge – but filter everything through a renewed mind!**

books – Christian and secular, fact and fiction

films

tv

other media – internet (with caution!)

circumstances – theological reflection

other preachers – listen/take notes

in church own/elsewhere

at eg Spring Harvest, Keswick Convention, New Wine etc etc

GOD Channel

Premier

UCB

Journal keeping

Build file for illustrations eg jokes/stories/human interest stories from the news etc

**Preparing to preach – the practicalities (think of it as worship!)**

Begin with the Bible – your given Scripture passage:

lectionary

following theme or series

specific occasion

*Pray! Pray! Pray!* At every stage!

Read the passage in the Bible, several times, meditate, pray, live with it for a few days – ask God for insight

Next use commentaries or maybe other resources eg Bible dictionary/Maps

Look at other related material - maybe a Christian book on this topic (eg Doubt by Os Guiness – others have written books on faith and doubt eg John Ortberg,

Philip Yancey)

**Congregation**

how well do you know them?

consider age (if All Age aim to pitch at 8 years old)

how Bible-literate are they?

type of service – length/style

local tradition – what do they expect? (preachers can bring challenge!)

**MAKING NOTES – Writing the Sermon**Prepare well!

Think structure – beginning – middle – end

lead people through with clarity – reassuring to guide them maybe with headings/points

can tell them at beginning – we’re going to look at xyz, then do it!

have logical progression – so take listeners on a journey

Bible as main source

think about including illustrations/examples/stories/humour – beware too many jokes – this is not ‘entertainment’

can help to keep attention

to engage listeners

a good illustration helps people to remember the message long after the service

If using a quote say eg ‘As CS Lewis said...’ or can paraphrase/restate in own words – good to keep note of your sources in case anyone asks – and for your own future ref.

Use of language – easy to understand?

Practice speaking it aloud – some things look good on paper but are not so easy to say...

Styles

**exegesis**

verse by verse exposition – good for preaching doctrine eg Paul’s letters

**narrative preaching** - if text is a story/parable – can retell through the eyes of a particular character in the story - makes for powerful impact – see it in a fresh light – can bring new insights

**What is your aim in the talk?** – What do you hope this particular talk will achieve? Bear this in mind to maintain clear focus.

**Encourage application**, application, application

Be familiar enough with your material to know what’s coming when you get up to preach – ie if you lose your notes you should still be able to give a talk

Some prefer using full text – large print – well spaced – easier to follow/find place after looking up – better to cope with possible distractions

Can use loose pages (or staple top left) Consider getting a folder with copy-save pages – or small ring binder

Give your notes a heading with venue/date/Bible ref etc – keep for future ref! Useful when you get asked for a copy of your talk or if you get the opportunity to re-use on another occasion or at a different church etc

Sometimes it’s better to use bullet points as guide or framework – eg debatable sermon

Or a mixture of both full text paragraphs and some in point form...

Can use alliteration – as pegs – aide memoire

Three point sermon – easy structure to keep in mind

**Delivery**

be aware of microphone – how to use correctly

in any case it is still good to project your voice

deep breathing beforehand – helps to relax

speak more slowly (we tend to rush if nervous)

be aware that people can look bored or fed up even irritated or puzzled when listening but this may not be what they’re feeling! Yawning, looking around/down at floor

(It can help to pick someone who seems engaged and look at them regularly!)

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speak clearly – be aware of pacing – use of pauses - timing – emphasis in voice esp with ‘punchline’ where wanting to make a point

avoid monotone – vary expression as appropriate

eye contact – helps you to engage with the congregation

body language – we can be unaware of this when we’re preaching - get someone to critique any distracting habits we may have eg, pushing glasses up, twisting earlobes, rubbing hands together etc

**Bibliography**

David Day A Preaching Workbook Lynx

David Day Embodying the Word SPCK

John Stott I Believe in Preaching Hodder

Roger Bowen (Ed) A Guide to Preaching SPCK

David Heywood Transforming Preaching SPCK

Maurice Burrell Preparing to Preach Athena Press

Michael J Townsend Thinking about Preaching Epworth

**Commentaries**

A one-volume commentary on the whole Bible such as IVP‘s New Bible Commentary can be useful but it’s good to build up a collection of others which cover single books of the Bible in an individual volume. There are many such series of commentaries available with varying styles – some more accessible than others! Explore a few to see what would suit you eg:

The Bible Speaks Today (various authors) – IVP

New Testament for Everyone (Tom Wright) – SPCK

Word Biblical Commentary (various authors) – Nelson

New Testament Commentary (William Barclay) – Saint Andrew Press

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