

Our Honored Guests...

Growing up in our home congregation, I remember when I became old enough as a young man to serve as an usher. The age requirement for this post was the ninth or tenth grade. I was baptized at age eleven. I had served on the table since junior high school. But now my service would lead to bigger things: being an usher.

Hillis Layne would train us freshmen boys in the etiquette of being an usher. Brother Layne knew it all when it came to being a gentleman. A more proper gentleman I have never met. He spoke with authority and astonished each young man receiving instruction. All of us listened to him and never interrupted. He would teach us the fine points of being an usher including the “proper words to say upon introduction,” and, “Only extend your hand to shake a gentleman’s hand, never extend your hand to shake a lady’s hand. However, it is proper to take her hand if she extends it to you.” He could have written the book. Brother Layne taught us how to seat our visitors and how to politely ask our members sitting at the end of the pew, to move to the center in order to make room for our guests.

I remember well his lessons from more than thirty years ago and appreciate brother Layne for taking the time to teach us proper etiquette. Brother Layne passed away about three years ago at age 91. Men such as him seem to be rarer each passing year. So, I will continue to practice what brother Layne passed on to me by politely asking all of us to “scoot” to the center of the pew, if not when you first sit down, then readily when you see a visitor looking for a place to sit.

We always announce that our visitors are our honored guests; perhaps we can show our honor more by making room.