

DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTIVE PREACHING

*As Identified by the Baylor University Survey**

1. Biblical/Exegetical:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which are based in scripture and exhibit good exegetical preparation. "Effective preaching is based on solid biblical exegesis." "The fabric of the sermon is woven from the scripture text."
2. Relevance:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which are relevant to his/her listeners. The sermon "is pertinent to their ordinary daily struggles to live the gospel." "The preacher should bridge over from the historical setting to the contemporary setting in order to address the cultural milieu of the congregation."
3. Preacher's Persona:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which reflect his/her own life experiences and commitment to the Christian faith. The preacher reflects "passion" as well as "integrity" in his/her sermons. "The preacher should have fully absorbed/be fully absorbed in the dominant theme or image of the sermon, so that the head, heart and gut of the preacher are appropriately involved in the spoken words. The words are more than woodenly read or recited--they become alive with the preacher's passion."
4. Theological/Orthodox:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which are faithful to Christian tradition. This involves the preaching of sermons which are expressed doctrinally "within the parameters of the Christian faith." "The sermon must touch on or reflect (if not deal with directly) some of the great Christian truths; even if the style is folksy or amusing the content must not be trivial."
5. Sermon Structure:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which are structured with a clear introduction, main body, and conclusion; all of which reflect a central theme or focus. The sermon is organized in a "logical style that progressively builds the main argument or proposition of the sermon." "The sermon should demonstrate clear thinking [and] have a structure to it that flows easily and naturally and contain[s] language that can be easily understood."
6. Effective Communication:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which clearly communicate the central idea through use of simple language and illustrations so as to convince the listeners of the message. Effective preaching is "persuasive" in that it "convinces or convicts the hearer." The effective preacher "effectively communicates a sense of God's presence and authority."
7. Delivery/Style:
The effective preacher preaches sermons which are delivered skillfully with appropriate poise, body language, gestures, eye contact, and voice quality. "The preacher always displays proper pronunciation, articulation, phrasing, rate, tone, pitch, and gesture." "Does the sermon have aural style and appeal? Is it conversational in tone? Is its language directed to the ear rather than to the eye? Is the sermon poetic--playful with words and oral images?"

** Illustrative quotations selected from the 1993 Mail-out survey to 333 professors of homiletics throughout the English-speaking world.*