

TEN  
TIMES  
TO CALL YOUR  
MINISTER

By

REV. CHARLES H. SMITH

*Presented to*

MEMBERS

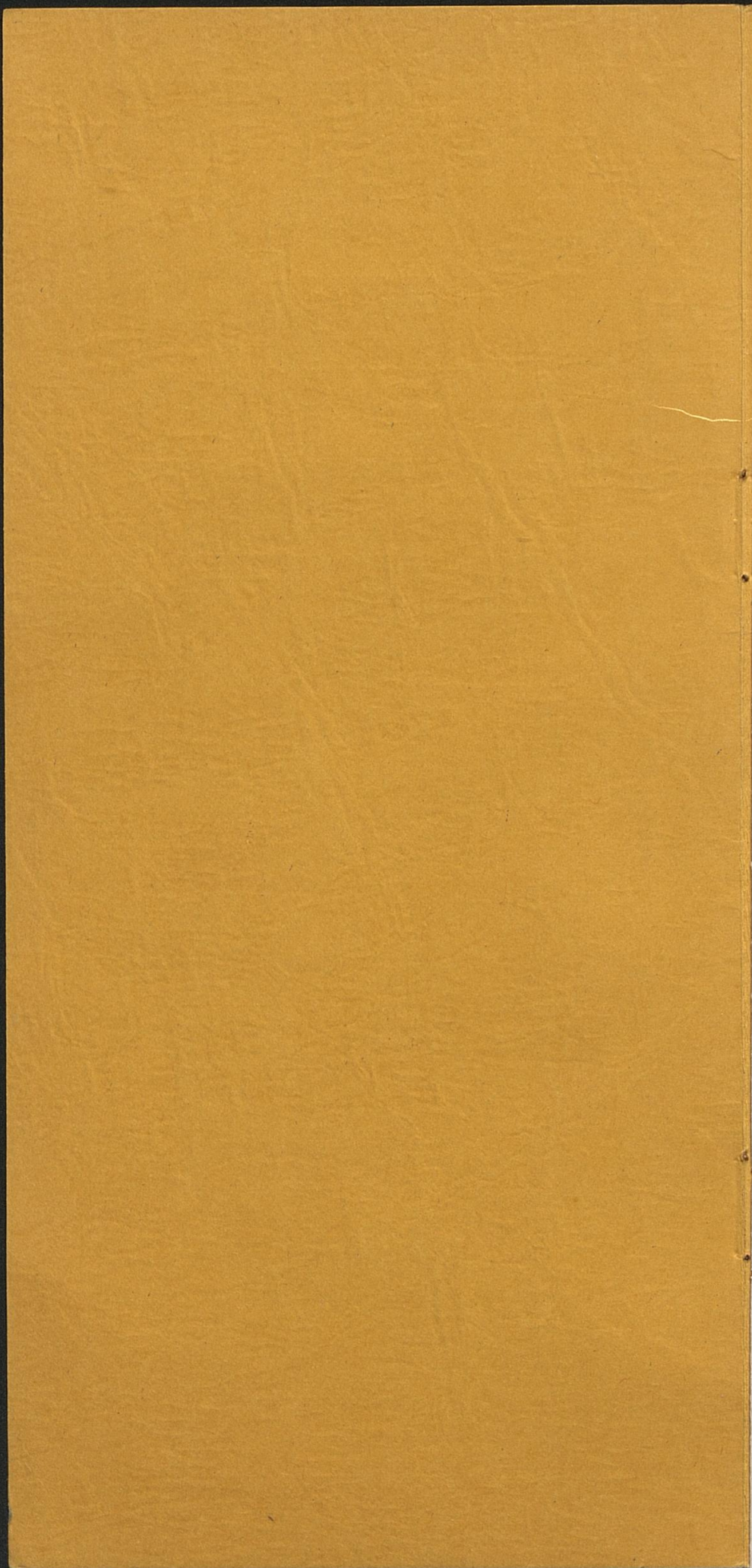
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

*of*

HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

REV. C. H. SMITH, *Minister*







*Ten Times*  
*To Call Your Minister*

To  
MY WIFE AND TWO DAUGHTERS  
*and*

THE MEMBERS OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
HUNTINGTON, WEST VA.



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## INTRODUCTION

Many people have the idea that the only time they should call the minister is when someone is critically ill, or when there is a death in the family. This is positively a limited and restricted view of the ministry and it is gradually being replaced by a wider understanding of the Christian minister in modern, rapid-changing society.

The traditional concept of the minister's work is preaching and conducting the worship services. However, the most effective part of his ministry is quite often his relationship to families and individuals at those times of greatest significance to them.

Today, with the diversified courses of study in the Seminary, most ministers have had professional training in counseling. And one of the first things the Minister learns is the limitations of his ability and the need to recognize situations where other help is needed. Oftimes, members don't know where to turn when victimized by some unexpected circumstance, here, the minister probably cannot give the member the specific answer, but he can refer them to one who can offer professional help in a given situation. Many church people simply carry their problems along all alone when there is help available from the minister.

The situations described here do not exhaust the various occasions when the minister can be helpful. The purpose is to indicate that there are many times when the minister can bring to people the resources of the Christian faith.

Before this relationship of interdependence can become effective, two elements must



be present, Love and Acceptance. Love serves as a basis for the concern. Acceptance opens the door for communication which is the channel for understanding. Trust and Confidence can only come after the door has been opened.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised . . . To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*

*Acts 4:18-19*

### **I. Before Going To The Hospital**

If there is to be surgery, the minister will make every attempt to see you at home or at the hospital before the operation and to express in prayer, (if so desired) the Christian's confidence and quiet trust in God. Ordinarily the best time for this call is the afternoon or evening preceding the operation. If you are going for a medical checkup or for tests, the minister would like to call sometime during your period of hospitalization.

Every minister has had the experience of having a parishioner say to someone, "When I was in the hospital the minister never came to visit me." He cannot call unless he knows you are there ! In this church, let's all notify the minister or the church office before going to the hospital.



## **II. When Liquor Becomes A Problem For You Or For Someone You Love**

Many people in our community, and some in our church, are out of control in their drinking. There are millions of people in our country in the same situation.

There are certain attitudes that may be taken toward the problem by well-meaning people only to make his situation worse. The alcoholic is not a hopeless sinner. He is a person who has become a problem to himself and to others. There are many other sins that are easily overlooked that compose an even greater problem for people than drinking.

There are no easy answers. The minister can help you to understand the problem and can provide authoritative literature in the field. There have been many complete "recoveries". The minister knows what resources are available. Above all, he views the alcoholic (or anyone that becomes a slave to alcohol) as a person who is out of relationship to his own best self.

## **III. When You First Observe Your Marriage Beginning To Wane**

When marital difficulties arise the minister is often consulted only after all arrangements have been settled, and in effect, he is asked to give his blessings to decisions already made. Call your minister when serious difficulties arise. Whether the difficulty be too much in-law interference or the inability to communicate with each other on any vital matter concerning the welfare of the family. Your minister stands ready to share his professional knowledge or refer



you to someone immediately who can help you. You may need a lawyer, but if you take the Christian view of marriage seriously, you will wish to talk your situation through with the minister long before matters proceed to the point of engaging legal counsel.

#### **IV. When A Baby Is Born**

When a baby is born the minister would like to call while the mother is still at the hospital. He will rejoice with her and ask God's blessing upon the child. The child is a member of "the household of faith." She cannot join the church until she has become of age whereas she can make her own decision. But the parents can request the minister to help dedicate the youth to God during morning service. The parents as well as the godparents participate in this brief ceremony.

#### **V. When You Would Like To Talk or Pray About A Difficult Decision**

Although each person must make up his mind in the final analysis, it is good to talk-out-loud your circumstance with someone not immediately involved. The big decisions of life are so important that they should be "talked out and prayed through." Whom shall I marry? What shall I do as my life's work? Should I change jobs? God never intended any of us to make decisions alone; they should be shared with family, loved ones, and friends. Often the minister can bring new light to the problem. In any case, he stands ready to discuss the matter in an atmosphere of confidence, friendship, and prayer.



## **VI. When You Know Someone In Need Of Spiritual Help**

Progress and success are dependent on the amount of cooperation each member of a given group can give each other. We must be concerned about others. It is a curious fact of human nature that people are often reticent to seek help just when they need it most. It is part of our Christian responsibility to be alert to the needs of others. Your name need not be revealed if you think it best that this not be done. The minister's first responsibility is to the members of the church but he receives many calls to serve people who have no church relationship and he is glad to respond. The New Testament puts this quite clearly: "We are members one of another" and this means that we should be sensitive and responsive to the needs of people.

## **VII. When There Is A Death In The Family**

For some people this is the only occasion on which the minister is called, but as we have seen, this is a limited and restricted view of the Christian Ministry.

If the minister is not already with you when death occurs in your family, he should be called to bring you the strong consolation of our Christian faith and to counsel with you concerning arrangements for the funeral and interment. No specific arrangements should be made for the funeral until after the minister has been consulted for if the Church is to be used or his services desired, close planning is necessary.



### **VIII. When You Are Confused About Your Faith**

Oftimes much frustration comes when one is confused about his personal relationship to God and the true place of the Church in his life. Tenets of the different faiths confuse us at times to such an extent that we become disillusioned. God and the Church seem a big joke to us. We feel that our time is being wasted when we go to Church for we can serve God just as well at home as at Church. This and other confusions can impair the growth of the children in the family unit and rob the parents of a wholesome religious experience with God. Talk similar problems over with your minister.

### **IX. When There Is Prolonged Reaction To Grief**

Grief and sorrow at the loss of a loved one are perfectly normal. Jesus made this clear when he said, "Blessed are those who mourn." The Gospel writer notes that Jesus wept at the death of his friend Lazarus.

However, when there is prolonged reaction to grief it is an indication that the person needs help. God does not intend us to live in the valley of the shadow of sorrow, but to pass through it into the sunshine and strength of normal life. The deceased is not forgotten, but having committed our beloved to the keeping of God, we are to live with Christian assurance and confident hope. When there is prolonged reaction to grief the minister knows the resources available to the person in need.



## X. When You Feel The Welfare Of The Church Is At Stake

People have, they do, and they will always talk. But always remember, when anyone talks about the Church and the Minister in a discrediting fashion, they are also talking about you. The Minister is not to be told every little unkind word said about him for this will only bogg him down in petty gossip and incapacitate him for God's Work. Don't listen to charges against the Church and the Minister unless the person telling you has had the spiritual strength to have gone first to the Minister or the other persons involved. If the person is afraid to go directly to the persons involved, his words would not be worthy of your attention. You will very often find that the biggest Minister and Church fighters are those who have failed in life and are afraid for anything or anybody else to do well. Since the world knows them and will have no part of them, they come to church to champion their cause of frustration. These persons are to be prayed for and with. But when you feel that the program of the Church is at stake, it is time then to come honestly to the Minister and relate your concern.

*O God, we thank thee for the privilege of serving thy people. Breathe on us the breath of Life that we may become living apostles. Fill us with thy love, in order that we may love what thou dost love and do what thou would'st do. In his name we pray,  
Amen.*







