

Essay Title: The Real Business of Sunday Mornings

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DO YOU GO TO CHURCH THINKING about which committee members you need to see to discuss some item of business? Do you have questions for staff members that are not of a spiritual nature? I would like to propose abolishing the idea that Sunday morning is a time to conduct church business.

In this day when the vast majority of us are connected with telephones, cell phones and email, I would like to propose that we use those tools to conduct church business at times other than Sunday morning. And if you must have committee meetings on Sundays because your members travel distances to get to church and they can't get there twice in one week, I suggest having some type of break or transition between business and worship services, so you can truly attend to the "real business" of church and engage in the spiritual renewal and growth that our ministers and worship presenters prepare for you as they plan the worship services.

If we are not so busy doing church business on Sunday mornings, we will be more welcoming to our visitors and attentive to the fact that they are guests in our "house." It is not just the job of a greeter to welcome visitors to our congregations – it is the hospitable thing for all of us to do every Sunday morning. This means not running around with notebooks or clipboards to handle committee matters or other work.

I frequently tell religious educators that they should establish a policy of not conducting church business on Sunday mornings. When I last worked in a church, the minister and I stood in the main entrance every Sunday morning to greet everyone as they arrived. I had a legal pad and pencil fixed on the door of my office, and whenever someone approached me about committee work or teaching schedules, I asked them to write it on the note pad and I would follow up later that week. Sunday mornings were my only time to connect with visitors and with young people and their families. I did not want to be distracted from those vitally important connections that one day of the week.

I want to be clear about what conducting church business means...it does not refer to tables or groups you might set up during coffee hour to inform members and visitors about church activities. It specifically means "insider" talk...things that are exclusive to those in a particular committee or group; business items like who is following up on a task or making arrangements for the next meeting.

If we are intentional about why we come to church on Sunday mornings – for worship and spiritual growth, then we can also focus on being welcoming to our guests. We can truly be open to them and I believe we will get a lot more out of Sunday mornings and perhaps out of Unitarian Universalism, as well.

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