

How to... Introduce a speaker

It's a common thing to have to do – to say this is X, give a bit of background, they are bringing us the next session on Y / preaching to us today from Z

Various reasons why we do introductions – culturally, socially, etiquette but...

One Big Aim: To get the audience ready to listen to what the speaker has to say

Introductions can be done badly – put the attention on you rather than the speaker, leave the audience confused and distracted and the speaker flustered or embarrassed

Introductions can be done well – audience on the edge of their seats

Philippians 2:19-22

- Brief, concise
- Commending, introducing who he is and what he's like, giving a bit of background
- **Big thing: making a CONNECTION**
 - partly through Paul himself – “I have...”, “son with a father” – this only works because Paul has a very strong relationship with the Philippians already – it may sometimes be appropriate where we know our audience very well and we want to introduce someone as our mentor, or someone who has really helped us etc.
 - v20 – Timothy loves you, he is on your side – a very powerful connection
 - v22 – “you know” – reminds them of what they already know or have heard about Timothy

This will need **PREPARATION**

- Ideally you know early on about the introduction needed, do homework, get in touch, meet up if possible
- Especially if doing an interview – need to talk at length, find out the most helpful things to create the connection (and things the speaker will not mention themselves in their talk) so you can ask exactly the right questions to draw these things out
- Need to know their name (ask them how they would like to be introduced), their marital status, children etc., what their current work is, why they have been asked to speak
- Arrange with them beforehand who is going to do the Bible reading and who is going to pray

Our introductions need to be, like Paul's, **SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL**

Phil. 2:20-22 – resonates with themes earlier in the letter about love, regarding others more than yourself, the priority of the advancement of the gospel, the centrality of Christ
And notice what he doesn't say about Timothy – his ethnic background, his education, his travels, his achievements

Phil. 3:3-9

Let's not introduce people the way the world does. The world gets people to listen to the speaker by dazzling you with his impressive CV, many degrees, big job, awards, title. Paul counts all that as rubbish compared to Christ.

Paul says, listen to me and Timothy because we are your servants, we love you and we love Christ, we share a common faith and gospel.

We're not saying don't be respectful – there is love and respect in the gospel – for everyone and especially our fathers and mothers in the faith and those who labour in teaching and preaching the Word.

And we're not saying never mention someone's education or achievements. But be very wary. Why are you mentioning it? Are we putting our confidence in the flesh? Jesus had no formal education. Neither did most of the apostles. Those who did never talked about it or only to rubbish it.

A person introducing A. W. Tozer went on and on about Tozer's marvelous qualifications. When Tozer eventually got to speak, he said 'All I can say is dear God forgive him for what he said, and forgive me for enjoying it so much!' (J.L. Snyder, *A. W. Tozer in Pursuit of God*, 2009)

Make a connection & make it shaped by the gospel