

The following guide is taken from Bethel Redding Church in Redding, California.

We want to steward the testimonies of what God is doing in our midst and elsewhere. Our heart is to do so with the utmost integrity and accuracy. Everywhere people are catching the vision of the value of the testimony and working to steward their own stories.

This guide was written to ensure that, as we cultivate the habit of keeping the testimony, we do so with wisdom, honor and integrity. You can download the full pamphlet for print at the link above.

KEEPING THE TESTIMONY

We recognize the importance of keeping the testimony: recording, repeating, declaring the great deeds of the Lord.

In the Old Testament, God's people had various ways of keeping the testimony: the written Word of God; the Feasts of the Lord that commemorated His great deeds, such as Passover, which recalled the deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt; and other means, such as stones of remembrance (1 Samuel 7).

Today, we keep the testimony through our varied means of communication: word-of-mouth, TV, video, Internet and print media.

We share the miracles and acts of God in our midst primarily to partner with and stay consistently conscious of the One who invades and transforms impossible situations. Keeping the testimony also gives Him glory and helps us to maintain a heart of thankfulness. Moreover, sharing a testimony releases the power of God to reproduce a like miracle. A testimony is like a seed that bears much fruit. When we testify, we get a harvest.

ACCURACY

Only report what happened that can be verified, such as "After receiving prayer, a woman could move her fingers freely without pain." She can't verify that her arthritis is completely healed but she can say she has mobility and is pain free or can do something now she couldn't do before. Say what you know is accurate and currently verifiable.

When sharing a testimony, please include all the things that contributed to the healing. If a person is healed of cancer and also underwent chemotherapy or other treatments, please mention previous medical help in the testimony. It does not diminish the healing power of God. We love the healing grace, compassion and excellence regularly demonstrated by the medical community.

If 700 people came forward to receive Jesus, report that. We do not know if they all were born again, rededicated their life anew or just needed prayer. We do know that they responded to an altar call, and we can say that.

SPECIFICS

Be specific with details you have without filling in "the blanks" you don't have. Notice the difference between the following testimonies:

"Elizabeth's back was completely healed!"

OR

"Eight years ago, following a car accident, Elizabeth Smithton had three back surgeries but still had much pain and two metal rods in her back, which, of course, restricted her movement. She could not bend at the waist. Since receiving prayer, she can now bend and touch her toes without pain. When she touches her back, she can no longer feel the rods and screws as she could before. What was impossible to do, she can now do pain free."

The second is more accurate and supplies details. It adds no assumptions (like "the metal has disappeared"). It just gives the facts:

who: Elizabeth Smithton

what: Surgeries couldn't stop the pain, metal rods

why: Car accident

when: Eight years ago

after prayer: Can now miraculously bend, can't feel rods and screws, has no more pain.

PERMISSION

Only mention the name of a person you ministered to when you have his/her permission to openly share the testimony. If you have permission, use their full name and you may want their contact info as well to follow up with them.

Please get written or filmed permission from those you film or photograph if you intend to post their photo or video on social networks or elsewhere online or to publish it in some other way.

Do not mention the name of a business (like Wal-Mart) where a testimony took place. Simply say "a store." Do not mention the name, position or title of a person whose job could be adversely affected as a result of your ministry and testimony.

HONOR

Share all testimonies in such a way that they glorify Jesus and not yourself.

Share the testimony like the person is in the room. Upon hearing his own story, he should feel respected, honored, and appreciative of how accurately you retold the testimony.

Report mission and ministry trip testimonies with honor for the place you visited without making assumptions about the place or its people. You may quote what the people there have said about themselves or their nation (like “They said, ‘Our people don’t usually do this’”) without making blanket statements about the whole country that are demeaning, such as, “It’s a very dark place.” or “They are not happy. It’s such a depressed place.” Just tell what Jesus did for them.

Do not give a public testimony about ministering to a famous person or government official. Be reluctant even in private as every phone is now a video camera and that testimony may end up on the web.

We must keep the confidences of influential people God is entrusting us to minister to by not using their name and position to promote ourselves or even the Lord! Don’t even ask permission. We do not want to undermine what God is doing in and through them by disclosing things they prefer to be kept discreet. Use wisdom and be trustworthy. Even vague testimonies can be researched if you provide details.

WISDOM

Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit about when to share a testimony and with whom. Sometimes Jesus told people to tell others what God had done for them:

“Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. — Luke 8:39

But sometimes, for His own reasons, He asked them not to broadcast, but to do something else. In Mark 1:41-44, He asks the man not to mention what happened but to go to the priest and make the required offering as proof to them. A modern application might be to show proof by obtaining medical records, or in the case of really sensational healings, waiting until medical tests confirm them before publicly announcing them.

ACCURACY & SPECIFICS

1. Only say what you know is accurate and currently verifiable.
2. Mention previous medical help in the testimony.
3. Be specific with details you have without filling in “the blanks” you don’t have.

PERMISSION

4. Only mention the name of a person you ministered to when you have his/her permission to openly share the testimony.
5. Please get written or filmed permission from those you film or photograph if you intend to post their photo or video on social networks or elsewhere online or to publish it in some other way.
6. Do not mention the name of a business where a testimony took place.
7. Do not mention the name, position or title of a person whose job could be adversely affected as a result of your ministry and testimony.

HONOR & WISDOM

8. Share all testimonies in such a way that they glorify Jesus and not yourself.
9. Share the testimony as if the person were in the room.
10. Report mission and ministry trip testimonies with honor for the place you visited without making assumptions about the place or its people.
11. Do not give a public testimony about ministering to a famous person or government official. Be reluctant even in private. Don’t even ask their permission to share it.
12. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit about when to share a testimony and with whom.

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933 College View Dr. Redding Ca. 96003