

Appendix 1

Good Introductions and Conclusions *(from Part 3 of One Step Ahead Preliminary)*

What makes a good introduction?

The introduction may include explanation about the structure or direction of the message, and the place this sermon has in the current sermon series. However if those things were all the introduction achieved it would be pretty boring! A good introduction ought to:

- a) *get people's attention*
- b) *highlight some kind of need*
- c) *give people a reason to listen to the rest of the message*

In the introduction you must make people listen to you. Too often we presume that people will lend us their attention as a matter of course. People can very easily switch off in sermons and their decision to tune in or otherwise is generally made during the first few minutes of your sermon.

What makes a good conclusion?

Unfortunately a great sermon can seem mediocre if the conclusion is mediocre. Paul Windsor suggests spending 'two thirds of your time on the last third of your sermon'. As general rules of thumb, don't introduce new material in your conclusion and don't say you'll finish and fail to do so! Beyond that, a good conclusion ought to:

- a) *add emphasis (or 'punch') to the rest of the sermon*
- b) *reinforce the central idea*
- c) *feel like a solid ending*
- d) *feel creative or unexpected*
- e) *be concise*
- f) *provoke a response*

A conclusion may include some form of summary but if that's all it is, it will be pretty boring! Vary your conclusions. Sometimes tell a story, other times make an appeal, other times leave them with a provocative question etc. Above all, your conclusion should bring the sermon to a climax – don't take your foot off the gas at the last bend!