

Two at the Counter

The Rev. Martin E. Pike Jr. of Texas walked into a restaurant and took a seat at the lunch counter.

Three minutes elapsed. Waitresses passed him by. Two cooks and a busboy took no notice of his presence.

“My ego was soothed only because the truck driver seated next to me was ignored as well,” the minister said.

“Maybe this counter is off limits,” he said to the trucker.

“Maybe they are short of help,” the truck driver responded.

“Maybe they don’t want our business,” the preacher said.

“Maybe they are taking care of those tables,” the trucker replied, pointing across the room.



The hands on the clock continued to move.

“Maybe they don’t like us,” the minister insisted.

“The air conditioning feels so good I don’t mind waiting,” the trucker shot back.

At that point, a harried waitress stopped to tell the two men that the water had been cut off, and the dishwasher was not functioning.

The truck driver smiled, thanked the waitress and left.

“I did not like him,” the Rev. Pike thought. “Three times I had sought his support for my obnoxious attitude, but he had let me down. Only later did I realize that he had chosen to practice what I was preaching.”

It is a stunning lesson for us. What is my attitude? What is your attitude?

By our actions and by our words, we are preaching a certain message. As leaders, by our example, are we causing others to practice it? And is it an unintended sermon?

These are questions worth pondering.

– Beecher Hunter