

MercEmail A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

A Standing Ovation

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Two weeks ago, I attended a High School graduation ceremony at a Christian High School. While there, an incident occurred that I didn't even give thought to until my wife asked me some time later if I had noticed it. Ever since she brought this incident to my attention, I haven't stopped thinking about it. Here's what happened.

As the graduating seniors were being introduced, some received special honors while others had their life-plans announced. One young man received a special award for being the best "Bible student and Christian example" at the school. For this, he received what I would call, "polite applause." Another young man revealed that it was his plans to get a Bible degree and spend his life preaching and doing mission work. Again, "polite applause." Then another young man announced his plans to enter the military to which he received a standing ovation.

Now, if you think I was opposed to the young man who was planning to enter the military receiving a standing ovation, you're mistaken. I feel it was totally appropriate. Nationalism and patriotism run deep within me. I was among the number of those who stood and applauded. But here's the question that has nagged at me ever since. If dedicating one's life to the service of one's country deserved a standing ovation, then how much more would the dedication of one's life to the kingdom of God deserve a standing ovation? Yet, among all those Christians present, myself included, we remained seated and politely clapped.

As I said, this incident has nagged at me and caused me to do a lot of reflection. I share it with you as a simple reminder of how easy it is, even for a group of Christians, to possibly lose focus and get caught up in the temporal and forget about the eternal. Give is some thought.

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