

# TELEPHONE COURTESY

## OUTLINE

1. Never regard the telephone as a mere mechanical device
2. Do not use the word, 'Hello'
3. Have a pencil and paper ready always.
4. Use only the most courteous words and phrases and only the most pleasing and inflective voice.
5. Study the best words, phrases and descriptions
6. Give special regard for your tone, voice, and degree of loudness
7. End your sentences with rising, not falling inflections
8. Make sure that your language is pleasing, refined, intelligent, appropriate and adequate
9. Keep your sentences short; your ideas clear, direct, practical, to the point
10. Be sure the common courtesies are always used like
11. "Phone as you would like to be phoned to"
12. Be quickly ready to apologize
13. Get a smile into your voice
14. Try to keep clear of nervous tenseness in your voice
15. Be always extra appreciative
16. Resist every temptation to become drawn into an argument, dispute or contradiction

## INTRODUCTION

I want to talk a little bit about "courtesy". Very specifically about one kind of courtesy: telephone courtesy. Telephones, I have found; but telephone courtesy I have seldom discovered. You call somebody, and you hear, "Allo! Allo! Yes! Yes! I am not listening!" And then click off. I think that maybe there is a better way of doing it.

Sometime ago I gave this lecture to a group like yourselves, and three weeks later I visited the home of a leader and I thought, "What is that beside his phone? A lecture on telephone courtesy!" It was right there beside the telephone. I was very pleased. I felt good.

There are some things that you need to know about the telephone. You must be especially watchful about telephone manners, because a telephone conversation is limited to three things: **Words, voice, and manners**. Telephone personality and courtesy must be carried through these three channels. The physical presence is absent, so the personality and courtesy must be highly concentrated in those three channels. I will give you a list of items which will help you develop telephone courtesy and manners:

### 1. Never regard the telephone as a mere mechanical device, and thus use it mechanically

You know what people do with telephones. But you need to think of it as an accurate extension of your voice and personality. Therefore be sure that you learn how to create telephone **personality** and telephone courtesy.

When I talk to Nicolay on the telephone, I know precisely what mood he is in -- If he had a good night sleep -- Did his baby cry? -- Did he have a problem with his wife? That all comes out in the quality of his voice. If you concentrate you can learn the same thing. You need to create a **personality** over the telephone that other people see as soon as they hear your voice.

## 2. Do not use the word, “Hello”

It is totally too abrupt. Instead say “Yes.hello this is Abraham.” Plain “hello”, what is that? It is not much. Start by giving your name or a firm name as identification. “Abraham, this is Sasha.” Always using a pleasant voice. Do it like you have just finished eating some ice cream, like you just finished a little celebration. Make sure that your voice is pleasant.



## 3. For courteous consideration of the person at the other end of the line, have a pencil and paper ready always

In your home or office the best thing to do is to have a pencil, and a little notebook right at your desk or beside your chair. Then you are ready for everything and don't have to make another person wait—or forget what you needed to do!. It is not a joke; it is a reality.

If you make the telephone call, make sure that you have any pertinent information in an orderly written fashion, to avoid delays and confusion. Such delays and confusion are telephone discourtesies. You understand we are not talking about phoning your boyfriend or girlfriend—something like that. We are talking about business. You are going to do a lot of business over the telephone. So there are a lot of things to talk about over the telephone. If you make it a habit, before you call the number to list of all the things you want to talk about on paper, then it will go much smoother. As a matter of fact, I make such a written list regularly. So I am practicing what I am preaching. If you train your other coaches to do the same thing, you will discover two things: your notes make it much more pleasant to talk on the telephone, and the mistakes will be held to a minimum. It just means training both parties.

Together with that, I noticed that my call may not be convenient at that moment., so then I make an appointment over the phone, I often say, “Can you phone me tomorrow night? And I will also try to phone you tomorrow night. Then we will see how it works the best.” This gives us 2 chances to get in contact.

## 4. In speaking to the other party, use only the most courteous words and phrases and only the most pleasing and inflective voice

You must realize that these are almost the sole representatives of your personality by phone. You may not understand how important that is. However, if you make a note of this lecture and have it handy by your telephone and you start practicing that, in about three months time you are going to begin to get results.

## 5. Study the best words, phrases and descriptions, relevant to your business

Whenever you pick up the telephone and you want to talk to somebody else, almost invariably there is only one reason why we do that: we want to hear a yes answer from the other side. “Yes, I will do that.” “Yes I agree with you.” “Yes, that is a good idea, go ahead. Do not worry about it. I will take care of it.” So you are always looking to get an agreement over the telephone. Now if you take the telephone, dial a number, and say, “Volodia, can you please take me tomorrow to Zitomir?” and he answers “No.” You are finished. But if you did it in some other way, “Volodia, my brother. Now when I think of a busy man I always think of you. But I know that you love me very much and I was just hoping you could give me a little bit of time tomorrow. Do you think you can change your schedule a little bit, and drive me to Zitomir?”

So by studying the words and phrases you want to use, before you begin, you can make your telephone call a success. That is exactly what you want. You hope to accomplish something. You can even make a list of some of these words, and write them out on a sheet of paper. Quite often you use the same phrases over and over. It would be a good idea for you to have about five opening phrases and five closing phrases written on a piece of paper, ready by the telephone, for you to choose from. They will represent a studied courtesy.



## 6. Speak on the telephone with special regard for your tone, voice, and degree of loudness

To be courteous, your voice must be free from harshness, over-loudness and heavy breathing. Otherwise they blast and offend the ears of the other party. A person has to hold the telephone away from his ear. For instance, when I talk on the telephone, I always think the lines are not clear and the people may not hear me. So my children tell me that outside our apartment in the hallway of our building people can hear everything I am saying.

I have talked to some people on the telephone and they have sounded very harsh. And I think, "Wow! Man, he is angry!" But it was probably just his poor telephone manner. Then you have the other people that you cannot hear at all. Or they breathe very noisily into the telephone while you are talking. There are so many ways to offend other people.

Maybe you have never thought of it. Maybe you made a mistake once or twice. That is no problem. But if you have certain negative habits, it is a problem. Pretty soon you phone somebody up. He picks up the phone. He hears your voice and he says to his wife, "Oh, it is John again!!!" You are not going to get very positive responses this way. It is very difficult to create good relationships.

For instance, many people ask me to pray. And usually I say, "Okay, let us do that right now." And I pray with them right over the telephone. I think you can only do that if you have some element of courtesy in your telephone conversation. "Thank you, dear God." Your voice goes up. You even look up. And almost automatically that is sensed on the other end of the line, and the brother automatically tends to raise his eyes also. "I am so glad that my brother and I can come before you at this moment."

## 7. End your sentences with rising, not falling inflections

This is in order to present a more courteous, cheerful personality. "Yes, I have tried to do that." "Sure I do not think it will be a problem." "Do you not think that would be *nice*?" And you feel good every time you say "nice" with a rising inflection.

Now downward inflections give off discourteous impressions of displeasure, or indifference, or lack of enthusiasm. "Yes, I can do that." "I do not think it is that bad." "What do you think about it." Pretty soon you just begin to feel lower and lower and lower. When you hang up, "Oh I am glad that is over." Think about what you are going to say and how before saying it. A sister began using such good inflections and she told us about her whole life being rebuilt or changed. That is exactly what can happen if you put these telephone courtesies into practice.

## 8. Make sure that your vocabulary, your grammar, your enunciation, your language in general, is pleasing, refined, intelligent, appropriate and adequate

Some people do not really know whether you are talking Ukrainian or Russian. Now most people figure out that it is not English, but.... Now that you are an educator it is important to think of your vocabulary. Your language should sound refined. Oh! you can pick that up almost immediately! When they talk to an intelligent person they usually speak clearly with the right loudness. And when they talk to me, they know, "Oh, this is a stupid foreigner." Better talk slowly and carefully choose your words." Now, when they have a less intelligent person they usually rattle on. Your language should be generally pleasing. It should be refined. Cultured. You should be an **artist**. It should be intelligent.

It should be appropriate. You are not going to talk anymore about "instructor" with your students, instead you will use the word "coach". And then you say, "Do you know what I mean by the word "coach?" And you explain it just a little bit. Intelligent, appropriate and adequate. Some people have the bad habit of cutting their sentences off and assuming the other person understands the rest of it.

## 9. Keep your sentences short; your ideas clear, direct, practical, to the point

"You know what I was thinking, and then I thought maybe about that, and I do not know what you think about that, but maybe it could be that, or well another way is possible." It would be very hard to figure out what you want. So, keep your sentences short. Your ideas clear, direct, distinct, practical and to the point.

It is even a good way to introduce your telephone conversation by saying, "I would like to share a few words with you about this and this." And you **state the topic** or your goal. "Well next week we need a special man to lead the singing over there and there. I have several ideas, and I would like to share some of these with

you and see what you think about it.” Now he knows what is coming, and it gives you opportunity to use some nice words to lead him to the right conclusion.

Wordiness, lack of clarity, or poor grammar, are essentially discourtesies. Somebody may hang up the telephone, and say, “You know, he still uses that stupid word. He has used that for over a year and I still do not know what he means by it.”

Now, brothers and sisters, I just want to be honest with you. Many of you folks have a great gift in artistic ability. And that is a good thing. But it also hinders you from thinking clearly and making concrete phrases to reach one goal. I have had several letters from Ukrainian people. The translator would translate it. It was very beautiful. There were some other nice things. It felt very comfortable. And then I asked the translator, “What did they want? I do not understand what they want. Why did they write?” The translator said, “I do not know either.” He read it again, shook his head and said: “I do not know what they want.” I have received several such letters like that. So it is very important to have a goal when you phone, and to use short, clear sentences and phrases. I recommend that in the beginning you make a written list and a little outline of what you want to say.

## **10. Be sure the common courtesies are always used like: ‘good morning’, ‘thank you’, ‘surely’, or brother and sister, etc.**

Sometimes I get a telephone call. “I need Abraham Bible. Is he there?” “Yes. It is me.” “Oh! It is you?” And I wonder, “Is this the police? Or what is this?” You should make sure you develop a system of using a courteous beginning phrase and a courteous ending phrase.

## **11. In general, “Phone as you would like to be phoned to”**

Avoid arguments. If you do not agree just write it down on the piece of paper, and next time when you see him face to face, discuss it then with him. Avoid arguments on the telephone. Avoid a raised or stiff voice. “Well OK. What are you doing?” That does not give a very good impression. Do not be indignant.

Do not use injured tones, like you feel hurt. “Oiii, that is terrible. Ohhh, I do not know what to do. You phoned at a very uncomfortable time. Ooow, you know this is the third telephone call in a row that has given me trouble.”

Do not use abrupt mannerisms. That is also very unpleasant. “Yes, I will do it. What else? What is it for? Good. Goodbye. Yes, yes, God bless you.” There are people who speak like that with sharpness! They speak with clipped accents or clipped tones.

## **12. Be quickly ready to apologize or say, “I’m sorry”**

**Never assume that it is the other person who is at fault.**

“Boy, it is pretty late all ready. I am sorry I phoned you so late.” Or, “You know, I understand that maybe this is a hard question for you. I am sorry, but I really did not know who else to ask.” This portrays the image that you want to serve, rather than that you think you are the boss, giving instructions, or demanding things from people.

You can easily feel if something goes wrong at the other end of the line. You must be quick to apologize. Never assume that it is the other person’s fault on the other end of the line. You do not know what is going on there. Maybe they are in the middle of a meal. Maybe the baby fell over in the bathtub. All kinds of things happen. It is easy for people to feel annoyed with your telephone call.



## **13. Get a smile into your voice**

By whatever way it does not matter, just get a smile in your voice. Example: “Good morning, do you know Jesus?” Whatever your make-up, or temperament, or disposition is to make that possible, use that character quality to bring a smile in your voice. Well, do you not think it is nice to have a smile in your voice? Or do you think it is better to just talk without a smile in your voice? You can hear the difference. It can be done. It is a combination of inflection, words, manners, attitude, and will-to-do. You can study to get rid of such things as an over rapid tempo. Or such a bad habit as a guttural

sound. Maybe you have a twangy sound? If so, you need to get rid of that. Some people chew on the telephone. That is a very noticeable and negative thing.

Think of your pitch. If it is very high, it is not very comfortable. If it is too low it is not very nice either after a long time. It is essential you develop some musical intonation in your voice. Each person has a natural bell like tone, which can be trained to lose acquired bad habits.

The best telephone voice is clear, well enunciated, ringing like bell-like tones in free vibration, through a mouth opened widely enough to prevent them from being "throaty" or "foggy." A forward placement of the voice, not a guttural one, makes the most courteous sounding voice. If you do not believe it, just phone home, and have somebody record it. Then replay it and listen to your own voice.

#### **14. Try to keep clear of nervous tenseness in your voice because it never registers as a calmly, courteous one**

"Yes, I am listening. Yes, yes, I will do it. Yes, of course." People sense that you are very unsure of yourself. Also watch out for errors of self-importance, cock-sureness, all knowingness, impatience. "Yes, yes, I have already done it. Yes, I know. No problem. Good. Goodbye." And you show that you do not want to give this person time.

Also watch out for misplaced emphasis. By emphasizing only one word you may give off a snooty or discourteous impression. For instance you can say, "I thought you would do that." Now let us say you add one word. "Well I thought at least you would do that." **At least** you, and with just that one extra phrase you really put the person in a bind. Here are some words that give discourteous impressions: "We always do." "Could you not possibly..." "Will you please be patient?" All those, are wrong expressions to use on the telephone.

#### **15. Be always extra appreciative. It helps to counterbalance the disadvantage of not being personally present**

"Oh, that is wonderful. Yes, thank you. How thoughtful. I am glad I can count on you." You should make a list of about ten phrases like that. Have them ready by the telephone. You will see how it changes people's attitudes toward you, and how it will beautify your own personal lifestyle.

#### **16. Resist every temptation to become drawn into an argument, dispute or contradiction**

"Yes, brother, I know how you feel about this, but look, let me tell you, I have ten reasons why I do not want to discuss speaking in tongues ." It is going to be a long telephone conversation that will go nowhere.

Also resist the temptation to repay discourtesy with discourtesy. Use conciliatory tones. Always offer opportunity for rectification of alleged mistakes. "Oh, aha, I see, I thought maybe that was not exactly what you meant, the way you sounded." Or, "I thought I knew you well enough that that was not exactly what you meant." Be courteous, sympathetic, practical, and helpful, even under provocation.

Example: This is to illustrate how people change their attitude when you are courteous to them. A pastor made a home visit to an unbeliever. He rang the doorbell. Out came this lady. He said, "Good afternoon, I am Pastor Hyles from First Baptist Church." She said, "Yes, I know you. I was in your church last Sunday. And you preached too long, and the choir was too loud, and I could not get out of there fast enough." He said to her, "I am sorry we have offended you. Would you please pray for me?" She was standing there with her cigarette and he just waited. Then she said, "Well, I am sorry I did not mean to hurt your feelings. Would you like to come in?" He said, "Yes, I will be glad to." Ten minutes later that lady and the pastor were kneeling on the floor and she was asking Jesus into her heart, because somebody knew how to make peace.

## **CONCLUSION**

This is what a telephone should be used for, as a business instrument that helps you accomplish your work much faster. And as something that other people, when they answer, are happy about. "Oh, it is you." They know you do not always talk for a half an hour. You are short. To the point. Courteous. Friendly. And leave them with a good feeling when they hang up. If you learn to do that, pretty soon you can do twice as much work over the telephone as other people can do in a day. And people will thank you for it.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

## *Practical assignment*

Completed

- Place several copies of the checklist below where you use your phone most often . After a telephone conversation evaluate yourself with the help of the questionnaire. If you can answer “yes” to at least ten of the items you are well on your way to becoming a courteous telephone user.



### **Telephone Courtesy**

Did I ... while on the phone?	YES
--have a pencil and paper ready	
--use only the most courteous words and phrases and only the most pleasing and inflective voice	
--use the best words, phrases and descriptions, relevant to my business	
--speak with special regard for my tone, voice, degree of loudness	
--end my sentences with rising, not falling inflections	
--make sure that my vocabulary, grammar, enunciation, and language in general, is pleasing, refined, intelligent, appropriate and adequate	
--keep my sentences short; my ideas clear, direct, practical, to the point	
--use common courtesies such as, ‘good morning’, ‘thank you’, ‘surely’, and ‘Mr.’ or ‘Mrs.’, or brother and sister, etc.	
--in general, “phone as I would like to be phoned to”	
--communicate a willingness to apologize or say, “I’m sorry”	
--get a smile into my voice	
--try to keep clear of nervous tenseness in my voice	
--express my appreciation	
--resist every temptation to be drawn into an argument, dispute or contradiction	

NOTE: you may want to hang this list above your telephone charging place as a reminder for future phone calls.