

Pastor,

Here are some suggestions for hosting a special day to recognize the military or other such groups. This will take work and timely planning. If you do not want to work at this then don't have this type of Sunday as it will be an embarrassment to your church and community if not done right. It will also be a waste of time for your special speaker. If done right you can improve it every year with better results. It will build good community relations and stature for your church in the community. People will also hear the Gospel that have never heard it before. These are suggestions only and not all have to be done. Serious consideration though, should be given to do as many of these as is possible.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A PATRIOTIC SUNDAY by Dr. Michael G. Marshall

Whatever name you choose for your special day the goal is the same. You will endeavor to honor those in your community for their service to that community and/or nation. One must major on veterans, active duty, guard and reserve personnel. You may also want to include Police and fire chiefs/personnel and/or mayor. Recognize them; give them Bible gifts, etc. You need to get out a letter of invitation and follow up with a phone call early in the planning. You will need to start no later than 60-90 days prior to the event so as to secure the necessary elements. Below are some things for you to consider.

1. Go on-line and find the different American Legion Posts names and addresses as well as those of the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars). They also should be in your local phone book. There will be a number of posts in the county. Invite them all and their highest ranking official to say a few words. If several posts may be present plan to invite their district commander so you don't have to have several post commanders speak and have equal time. They love to strut their stuff and will be somewhat insulted if they do not get some limelight.

2. Make sure you start selling your people on this early and delegate, delegate, delegate. Inspect what you expect and overseeing it so people get their committed tasks done. Don't ever assume anything. Have frequent planning and progress meetings. Keep good notes as what you learn the first year. It will make every other year much easier.

3. Plan to have a color guard. These can be secured from American Legion posts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Civil Air Patrol Squadrons, Marine Corps League, National Guard Units, ROTC units, even the Boy Scouts if necessary to post the colors properly. Invite all these organizations to be present as well. Go on-line to secure a copy of the flag code to make sure you set up the display of the flag properly. On the platform order differs from off the platform, etc

4. Make sure you recognize all who are there in a big way. Bring them to the platform and honor them with plaques, certificates, Bibles, etc. NOTE: *Bearing Precious Seed Ministries in Oshkosh, Wisconsin (Out of Wyldenwood Baptist Church) has a great military New Testament we have used at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Milwaukee. Contact Jim Hoffman (920-235-5560) to see about the availability of these Bibles for this day.*

5. Decorate the church inside and out. Military flags can be purchased cheaply on-line or even at the sportsmansguide.com. Make sure you get a P.O.W. flag, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard at least. Put up banners as well. Plan to have a moment of silence for the P.O.W.'s and set up a small table at the banquet with empty plate, salt and lemon and a glass for a P.O.W. table The Legion can help you get the details of how to do that or I can review it and get back to you.

6. Make sure you plan great stirring music, recitations of the Gettysburg address, etc. What ever you come up with make it good and not tacky. A little good goes a long way but tacky goes farther, but in the wrong direction. Invite in college ensembles or other groups if you can.

7. Get a good CD of patriotic songs on the internet and have these rousing songs playing through your sound system as people enter and after the service as they exit.

You may want to consider restructuring your Sunday morning and revamping it just for that day. You may want to abbreviate Sunday School so as to have all these things in place and have friendly greeters at the door.

9. Make sure to have a meal etc. after the service and include the various posts to set up a table for recruitment and to say a few words in the banquet setting making it somewhat formal.

DETAILS OR PROBLEMS CONCERNING A PATRIOTIC SUNDAY

If you are having problems concerning how to set up the order of service or dealing with the various veterans groups please feel free to contact Dr. Mike Marshall as he has had extensive experience with these types of services as a pastor for 23 years. These groups have certain considerations that should be known to maximize your special day. Dr. Marshall can work with you on various aspect of the service. Feel free to call him at 847-691-5295 or email at mike@marshallminutes.org or mikemarshall@afbmissions.com.

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7. Get a good selection of patriotic songs from the internet and have these rousing songs playing through your sound system as people enter and after the service as they exit. You may want to consider restructuring your Sunday morning and revamping it just for that day. You may want to abbreviate Sunday School so as to have all these things in place and have friendly greeters at the door.

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9. Make sure to have a meal etc. after the service and include the various posts to set up a table for recruitment and to say a few words in the banquet setting making it somewhat formal. If you do not include them actively they will leave either before the preaching or right after it. They need to be made a part of the whole thing.

10. Don't forget visitor cards and follow up on them the very next week or they will slip through your fingers.

11. Invite the press and inform the press. Put out a press release to all area papers, television and radio stations. Make a big deal over who your guests are and who will be there.

12. Videotape the service if possible.

13. Consider a patriotic song/performance. For example: a men's quartet could wear military uniforms when singing as well as he ladies wearing nautical type dresses (Navy blue with white piping), duffle bags, sea bags, rifles, etc as props. There are several ways to do this that may not involve a lot of money.

14. Set up a church pride table. Let them bring in pictures and paraphernalia from their own military history or their families. Pictures, medals, uniforms, historical narratives, etc. Post a guard at this table to keep an eye on the stuff so it doesn't walk away.

15. Make up church packets containing church brochure, tracts, information on your times of services and ministries you offer. If you can afford it, purchase pens, calendars, church info magnets (for refrigerator doors) etc. to give out so that your name is exposed and around their house.

16. Invite local recruiters from all branches of service branches.

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