

Pleasure Trips

By Carl McMurray

“Pleasure trips” are things we take to relax, to get out of “the grind.” They may range anywhere from a Saturday afternoon drive in the country to a full fledged financed vacation to Disney World or Hawaii. They can also describe what happens when young children (or not so young) get bored in worship and go into “manipulation mode” with parents.

That’s what is going on when little ones continually “must” go out to rest rooms, water fountains, or just to stretch because they’re tired of sitting. Pleasure trips. That’s what’s happening when a small one is happy as a clam playing in the cry room or foyer, but fussy and stubborn in the auditorium. Manipulation, even by that beautiful non-walking, big eyed, God-given wonder in your arms. They learn fast.

Different solutions are tried. Bringing toys or snacks for an infant may suffice, but a larger child can be as disturbing with a toy truck as he is when arguing with his mother. Some parents try to ignore the problem, however, children have ways of not being ignored. Again, if your goal is to train the child while not disturbing the worship of others, a child who continues talking and asking to go out will not be the answer. The real answer to canceling “pleasure trips” might be three-fold:

- 1) Parents might consider the abilities and attention spans of young children and make sure they have pencil and paper. Even very young children can copy notes from overhead screens.

- 2) Make sure “necessary” excursions are not “pleasant journeys.” Young children should not be allowed to wander the halls, play in the foyer, or daydream in the rest room. Holding Dad’s hand for the trip might help both the child to be serious and Dad to say, “hold it!” If discipline is the purpose for the trip, make sure it is quick and painful. The young child should prefer sitting still to going out those back doors and a few painful trips can get that lesson across.

- 3) Lastly, make time at home to sit quietly, read to, and talk gently with your child. Teach them at home that there is a time to sit and listen and other times to run and play. If the only time a young one is trained and disciplined is during worship, they will quickly learn to dislike “church.” After all, that is where they get scolded! Teach them at home to respect prayer times and know there are quiet times. Save those pleasure trips for long Saturday afternoon drives.