

Suggestions for Young Men Considering Attending Seminary

By Prof. B. Gritters

Dear Young Brothers,

These suggestions are only that—suggestions. But they are seriously made with the hope and prayer that the inclinations you feel towards the gospel ministry may be confirmed in you. May they be of some use to you in these years prior to your admission to seminary. If we can be of any help to you, please contact any one of us.

1. Read and study I Tim. 3:1-7. Ask your elders and minister to help evaluate your qualifications for the ministry. Meet with them. Ask them to be open and frank with you. It will be their responsibility to write a recommendation for you as part of your application to the seminary. (In this process, you must learn to receive criticism without becoming defensive.)
2. Take an *active* part in the whole life of your congregation—both official and organic. Ask yourself, “Do I love the saints?” (see John 21:15-17). Pray for the heart of a servant: visit old saints on Sunday afternoons, ministering to them, listening to them especially regarding the history of the congregation and denomination. Ask good questions.
3. Seek opportunities to teach. You must develop in and be judged regarding this most important qualification for the ministry. Without being forward or presumptuous, ask your consistory if they might allow you to teach Sunday School or lead Young People’s Society.
4. Read Scripture systematically, and memorize Scripture. Develop good private devotional habits.
5. Systematically read through Hoeksema’s *Triple Knowledge* (or something similar) before church on Sunday mornings, according to the Lord’s Day that will be preached that day. In this connection, pray fervently that you not develop a critical attitude towards preachers, but a prayerful and sympathetic attitude, especially toward your own pastor, God’s appointed servant for you and the congregation.
6. Listen to and read good sermons, examining them for content and organization. Ask pastors for recommendations.
7. Read an article or two in the *Church Order* and the confessions as you wait for worship to begin. However, don’t keep your nose in the book so much that you appear antisocial, or are unaware of the congregation (remember Hebrews 10:24: “*consider* one another.”)
8. Begin acquiring a basic minister’s library, with emphasis on *basic*. Spend more time reading good books than collecting them. We do have a recommended list for a “More-than-basic minister’s library.” Ask us.
9. Read *many* good books. I can send you a copy of the old “pre-sem required reading list.” In former days we were required to read 100 books from this old list. (I am aware of Eccl. 7:10!)
10. Read Strunk & White *Elements of Style*, and not only if you are weak in English grammar skills. It’s a great little book.
11. Get good, regular advice regarding what classes to take in college. The seminary’s registrar and our catalogue can be a start in this.
12. Take another speech class if you can, especially if the teacher has a good reputation.
13. Be in communication with us at the seminary often. We are interested in helping you out.