



Street Preachers' Fellowship

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

On Dealing with the Police

1. **Always speak in a professional manner.** Yes Sir, No Sir is the absolute rule of the Fellowship. No Street Preacher serves a righteous cause in being publicly rude to an officer. Your attitude will go on the report and will meet with the same disrespect.
2. **Always designate one person in charge to talk with the police.** This is a no exception rule. More than one person talking to an officer confuses the issues, and will ultimately bring more officers. In every incident, only one officer is the designated call officer, and he will do most of the talking. The others are assist officers. If it is a 2-man unit, one officer will be the senior officer and will do most of the talking. Never allow any other preacher to speak to the call officer, or his assists. This will leave only one preacher's response to show on the record. Unless asked for identification, other participants should refer all questions to the designated spokesman and person in charge. If this person is preaching when police have arrived, he should immediately cease, and another takes his place.
3. **Always make a point of asking for the officer's business card.** Every officer carries one. It will help set the atmosphere, if you immediately do this, and even give him yours. If he refuses, or does not have one, ask "Do you mind if I write down your name and badge number before going any further?" (Write down every officer's name).
4. **Always stand facing the officer, and slightly away from his gun side.** Never stand close to the Officer's gun side. Most will not allow you to do so, and are very conscious of where & how you are standing. Always remain relaxed, and stand just within his reach (he will keep that distance if you do not). They are taught to keep just within reach of a person, but far enough away to execute an elbow defensive block. Standing so, will make the officer less apprehensive of you. Standing too close to an officer, or too far away, makes him nervous, and he will pay more attention to this than to what you are saying.
5. **Never stand with a sign in your hand while talking to the officer.** Most will not allow this. Make it a point to place the sign down, or hand it to another.
6. **Determine the temperament of the call officer before you commit yourself to making decisions that will be irreversible.** The officer is doing the same to you. Confrontations with police are often caused by failure to do

this, and will ultimately drag you into an argument that has no solution beyond a physical standoff. There are a number of things to do immediately, to help you determine the temperament of the call officer.

- A. Upon his approach, smile and attempt to shake his hand while introducing yourself, and any other preacher close by that is not preaching.
 - B. Attempt to maintain the lead in the conversation, and inquire as to how the officer is doing today... They keeping you busy?... Nice weather today!... etc.
 - C. Behave naturally as if nothing is wrong. If the officer is arrogant and proud, he will immediately cut you off, and you will know that he has already pre-determined you are doing something wrong! If the officer resents allowing you to take the lead, and talks down to you, immediately shut up, and listen quietly and politely, and when he is finished, ask him to call a supervisor. You cannot deal rationally with this type officer when he has already made up his mind you are breaking the law! He will not be taught Constitutional law from you! If the officer is calm, and does not mind allowing you to lead the conversation, and is polite answering your inquiries, keep him in this mood, while politely explaining the situation, and your knowledge of your Constitutional Rights to preach in the open air. Refrain from attempting to teach the officer what the law says. Confine your remarks to explaining your knowledge of the law, the Constitution, and Supreme Court/ Federal Court rulings. You will get further framing your conversation as to what you know about the law, then about what he doesn't know! Proverbs 15:1 is always the rule!
7. **Never go out on the street without first determining before God what your set options are, and what you are going to do with His help!** You will never demonstrate confidence in your position to the officer, if you have not ahead of time made up your mind to go to jail, if need be! Indecision on your part, strengthens an officer's confidence in attempting to bully you into submission. Decisions made under stress, are many times the wrong decision, unless you are trained by experience to work that way. Be very, very careful in allowing pressure, fear and stress to change your mind on the street, about a plan you prayerfully constructed when not under the stress of this moment.
8. **Defying a police order to cease.** This is a difficult time in any preacher's ministry, and in any officer's day. Never do this disrespectfully! Never do this except in matters pertaining to free speech and right to assemble. Never do this unless you have conducted yourself lawfully in everything you have done that day. There is a difference between legal

conduct, and lawful conduct. The right to preach, distribute gospel tracts, and display signs are lawfully protected Constitutional activity. However, there are times and places that those lawful activities can be restricted in the manner by which you exercise such lawful conduct. When those restrictions are narrowly drawn by the authorities so they do not unreasonably interfere with the lawful exercise of your Constitutional Rights, the police are within the law in enforcing those restrictions. To defy those restrictions makes your lawful conduct illegal. However, the personal opinion of the police officer is not considered by the Supreme Court as meeting time, place and manner restrictions, but is itself unlawful. Examples of conduct Police can restrict: Passing out tracts to people in automobiles driving/stopping in the street; Blocking entrances to stores; Blocking pedestrian traffic; Attempting to force people to take literature after they have refused it; Preaching in a residential/hospital district, or an area restricted for the protection of government officials, Etc. It is not the position of the SPF to defy the police in areas that can be restricted. But it is the position of the Fellowship not to allow the police to defy the Constitution and our God called command to preach the gospel to every creature.

9. **How to refuse an Officer's order.** Always be polite, but firm. If you need a moment to advise the people preaching with you about what you are about to do, most officers will allow you time to "consult with folks". It is wise to excuse the women and minor children to move away from the vicinity (across the street). Always allow one person to remain at a safe distance to film any arrests and verbal exchanges. Without delay, offer one of those quick Nehemiah prayers (Nehemiah 2:4), and advise the officer in charge that you respect his authority, and understand he has an unpleasant job to do, but that you cannot conscientiously adhere to his Unconstitutional, and unlawful demand, and that you will have to continue preaching even at the cost of imprisonment. If at all possible, avoid having to defy an officer's command when the police are overbearing, and over reacting. It will not always be avoidable, but try your best. Once you have advised the officer in charge of your intentions to continue preaching, then without further conversation, step away from the officer and continue preaching. He will do the rest!
10. **Submit to Arrest.** When an officer places his hands on you, whether he advises, "You are under arrest", before or afterwards is immaterial to the arrest. From the moment he places his hand on you, you are lawfully under arrest. He is required by law to advise you that you are under arrest. However, the law does not govern his every action, nor how quickly he tells you. His specific department has rules of arrest governing the procedure, but these differ from city to

city. Most officers will tell you immediately that you are under arrest, and physically constitute that command by grabbing you by the arm to either handcuff you, or search you for weapons. (Never carry a weapon on the street, permit or otherwise). When the officer takes hold of you, immediately cease preaching. Anything beyond complete submission can and may be construed by the officer as resisting arrest, and to do so, places your loud vocal expressions out of the realm of true preaching, and into the arena of vocal diatribes. You are now numbered with the transgressors, and the wisest court in this land will tell you, the wisest thing to do when arrested is “Remain silent”. You have had your say, now let them have theirs.

11. **Things to watch for and avoid while being arrested.** You are a preacher, not an activist, or a protester. Behave like a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You came there to stand and preach. Do not sit down in protest because the cost of standing to preach is going to jail. Stand up like a man, and “be subject” to the arrest according to the scriptures (Romans 13:4,5) for “obeying God rather than man” (Acts 5:29). When arrested by an over-reacting, arrogant officer, be very careful, and constantly alert. There are officers who will physically rough you up, to provoke even the smallest reaction from you, so they can escalate it into resistance, and either harm you physically, or charge you with resisting arrest. From this point on, you are required by law to give your name, address and birth date, but nothing more. Keep your mouth shut, and resist the temptation to speak further.
12. **Do not sign any statement, or promise to do anything other than show up for trial.** Police and magistrates are infamous for trying to sucker a street preacher into signing a promise not to preach anymore until the trial is over. Under our judicial system, you are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Until the state can prove your actions unlawful, they are to be presumed legal, and you cannot be forced by threat of further imprisonment for refusing to promise not to preach until after the trial. This is a serious violation of your Constitutional Rights to due process of law. If they confiscate any property (signs, tracts), they must give you a receipt for that property. Failure to do so, constitutes theft! Beware of what you sign when they are either keeping, or giving back your property. Verify everything before signing a return receipt. Do not sign anything whatsoever when they unlawfully confiscate your property without a warrant. When released, rejoice as per Acts 5:41, and call your State Director.