



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## Jump Start #2212

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**2 Timothy 4:6** *“For I am already being poured out as a drink-offering, and the time of my departure has come.”*

Our verse today leads into those famous words of Paul where he says that he has fought the fight, kept the faith and finished the course. Those noble words are used to remind us to stay true until the very end. But it's our verse today that I want to focus upon, especially, "the time of my departure has come."

We understand departure times. That's a common expression when on flies. Planes arrive and planes depart. Based upon the departure time, determines what time you have to get to the airport. The word for departure is the same word for "exit." Paul was about to exit this place. He had another place to be and it wasn't here.

Just a few thoughts:

First, Paul was realistic about his situation. He understood that he was about to be executed. He was going to die. He was soon to exit. He had a departure time. Too many do not realize what time it is for them. They have unrealistic optimism that everything is going to turn around and get better. Full of disease and out of options, some families just do not accept the fact that there looms a departure time. Paul knew it was soon. He was telling Timothy.

Second, we all have a departure time as well. Most of us do not know when it will be. Hebrews tells us that it is appointed unto man to die once and then the judgment. That divine appointment is the same as the time of our departure. We ought to make the most of each day, living with the understanding that we are moving closer to that divine date appointed for us. Now, we can live in fear or dread, or by faith realize that what awaits us is that heavenly home with the Lord. Work for the night is coming, is yet another expression that describes this divine appointment.

Third, our work here is completed when the departure time comes. There is no over time. There is no extra hours beyond the departure time. Some things are left undone because our departure time came. There has been unfinished books because the author died. Unfinished symphonies because the composer died. There is no coming back and finishing those things.

Fourth, even though we depart, we leave behind impressions, footprints, legacies, and examples. Paul is gone, but here we are today talking about his words. God has preserved these for us. In many ways we all leave behind memories and examples for others to follow.

I write these words this morning with such an impression deep upon my heart. I watched a good man depart yesterday. He was more than a friend. He was a kind, wise and benevolent believer who served the Lord with all that he was. He served God's people as a shepherd until health would not allow that. He taught the Bible. He was a friend to all. A former teacher and principal, he had the hearts of others always before him. With his loving family gathered around him, knowing that the angels were present, he took his final breath and peacefully crossed beyond the doorway of death into the next room God has awaiting for us. The time of his departure came.

Death in the movies is so fake and dramatic. No final farewell speeches. No music playing. No sunshine bursting through the clouds. Just quietly, peacefully and gently, it ends. And, for believers we know that it doesn't end. It doesn't end by looking at a dead body. It doesn't end with a funeral. It won't end with a trip to the cemetery. In fact, there is no ending. It never ends. There is simply a shifting of rooms. A change of locations. There is a comfort in knowing that the believer is in the hands of God. There is a peace in knowing that the departed is feeling the best he has felt in years. Safely home. A life well lived.

The time of my departure, what interesting words. Some want to quit before it's time. Some want to lay down and do no more before they should. Some have never done much their entire life. Not my friend. He devoted his life, his career and his heart to helping others. A friend to preachers, especially young preachers. A sharer of his blessings. A confident guide to those who walk with the Lord. He walked through life with a smile on his face. Medically, his heart was troubled, but spiritually, his heart was golden. Easy to talk to. Patient. Helpful. I sat through countless meetings and enjoyed listening to his insights and history. I expect had the Lord allowed him another decade here, he would have found ways to serve, help and encourage. That was simply within his spiritual DNA. But it was time. He had a departure time. To think that he was at services on Sunday, frail and weak, and on Thursday the angels were carrying his sweet soul to his appointed rest. He was more than a reader of our Jump Starts, he was a great supporter of them. One of the reasons we have continued on and one of the reason we have put so many themes to booklet form is because of the love and direction of this good man. He lived life well. His steps, his words, his thoughts were all chosen with the Lord in mind. Perfect he wasn't. But saved by grace and enjoying his walk with the Lord, this man showed us the good side of life and of being a Christian. We tend to complain and see problems all too much. My friend had a special way of seeing the Lord. And, to think, now he's with the Lord, never to leave again. Safely home, where he belongs and where he longed to be.

The time of my departure has come. I shall miss him and I shall never forget him. I only hope that when my departure date comes I will have left a trail of goodness behind me as he has. Every once in a while, not very often, your life intersects with a truly special believer. Their kind is rare. They are not loud. They are not about themselves. But gently and quietly they touch lives and make them better. They leave a path toward God. They have a special way of making you just want to be good. They have Christ dwelling within them. What an example. What a life lived with excellence. What faith. What hope. What joy. What love.

Thanks, Dave. You helped me be a better person. And, thank you Lord, for putting living examples before our eyes.

Roger Shouse

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