

# Appreciate the importance of humor

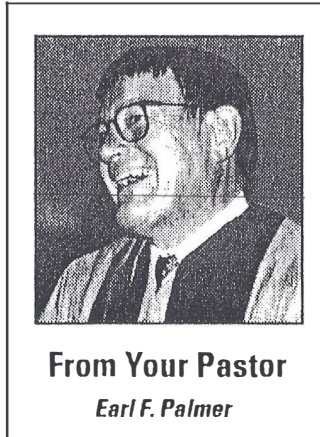
**N**ot all laughter is good. When we laugh *at* people it can be harmful, and we even know it while it is happening. This is why jokes about sex or race or relationships that diminish another person or ourselves don't make us happy. Instead, they make us cynical and more lonely than we were before. They deaden our feelings.

Good humor is just the opposite. It enriches us and those around us. Its laughter is healing and it makes people more important to us. That is because good humor does three things:

- it helps us face what we fear;
- it encourages our relationship with people,
- and it helps us to see things in a different light than before.

During World War II Winston Churchill was not only an inspirational leader of all of those who fought against the terror of Nazi Germany, but he was also a humorist. Adolf Hitler proudly announced at a Nazi rally during the Battle of Britain that Germany would wring England's neck like a helpless chicken. Churchill spoke the next day in Parliament and said that Herr Hitler was in for a big surprise with his "English Chicken" because he would find out that England is "some chicken with some neck."

We all know what happened, so we know what a good joke Churchill told. When you think about it, we now realize that Churchill's words, his cigar, his hat and his proper London suit were humorous jabs at terrible fears that a nation under siege really needed.



up to fears, but also to encourage relationships and build into our lives the nourishing effect of good laughter.

My advice for friendship-building is this: Find out the good things that the people in your life call fun and then try to help them happen. Also, let them know what are the fun things you like to do. Talk to each other about the humorous parts of books and films and poems so that your friends know your sense of humor. In this way they will, for sure, discover your values and your character.

Sometimes we are too serious about relationships; we wait for the deep philosophical conversation to happen, and then we let the funny moments and events slip by unnoticed for how important they are. Why not talk about them and then see

Humor is like that; it lightens up dark moments and it also enriches relationships. That is why families and all friendships need funny moments as much as what we think are the conversations about issues and truth. What a family laughs about is a good clue to the values and truth at work in it. We need funny traditions and funny moments, not only to face

what happens?

Just for the fun of it, I'll help you get started with another one of my lists. Here is my personal list of the twelve funniest movies that I've seen. They are guaranteed to start up a lot of humorous talk in any family.

**Singing In The Rain** - The funniest of all movies, with a good story too

**Wizard Of Oz** - Marvelous characters, scary but fun — a classic

**What's Up Doc** - Just plain exaggerated comedy

**Mary Poppins** - Each character is worth getting to know

**It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World** - The film is uneven but Jonathan Winters is worth the price.

**Around The World in 80 Days** - Cameo roles at their very best, especially the San Francisco sequence

**Good Morning Viet Nam** - This is both serious and humorous, a masterpiece of a movie

**A Night at the Opera** - Some of the best slapstick anywhere because of the Marx Brothers

**Strictly Ballroom** - A film that sneaks up on you

**Hello Dolly!** - The perfect blend of warm-hearted comedy and singable tunes

**Father of the Bride** - An example of the sheer fun of exaggeration, and tender at the core. Steve Martin is at his best.

**A Shot in the Dark** (The second Pink Panther movie) - As the bumbling inspector, Peter Sellers helps us laugh at our own pretensions