

Tips for Thought for the day

- **Warning**

Never offer or agree to do a Thought for the Day unless you are prepared to listen to the radio station or read the paper in advance. You are offering a gift, which is chosen for that person and you need to know them! Each station is different and you should ask about the “audience profile” i.e. who’s listening? Listen to a variety of styles on other programmes and stations too. It will give you some ideas.

- **The Ethos**

Thought for the Day is not a sermon. It is neither for members of the church nor clergy. It is not your soapbox to vent pent up angst about issues you feel strongly about, and neither is it your chance for fame and fortune. It is the privilege of speaking to people for whom religion in any form is nonsense, frightening, something cosy or their whole reason for being... and not necessarily Christians. You are inviting them to touch briefly on their spiritual reality at a level that reflects the thought provoking, not life changing.

- **The Method**

Find out how long you have to talk. 20 secs, 1 min, 2 min for an idea of the level of content. 2 mins is three quarters of a side of A4 typed at a standard font. You will read at about 3 words a second but must make it sound like speech. Write as a listener with all the standard abbreviations used in speech such as “you’ll” and “It’s” when you write to read.

- **What to say?**

You may be given a theme in which case stick to it rather than use it to work in your own. The structure for most local radio “Thoughts” required you to build up a picture in the mind of one listener. It helps to imagine that person in accordance with the station’s audience profile. Use your own experience of life, people, the news, or an event to inspire you. Open the image in a couple of sentences. You have less than 5 secs in which the listener will decide whether to stay with you. Don’t patronise or presume your audience knows what you are going to say. Lead through the story lightly and easily. Humour may work but be careful. No vulgarity. No jargon. No altar calls or incitement to aggravation with other faiths. Conclude with the thought you want them to hang on.

- **Afterwards**

Listen to it when it goes out. This is the only feedback that counts. Ask the opinion of the producer. Don’t forget they have a right to use material as they feel appropriate.