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## Why Can't You Just Be On Time?

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## Why Can't You Just Be On Time?

**By Jim Smith**  
UCF Forum columnist  
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Imagine going to any public event and a fight breaks out over saving seats. This was just the case recently in Memphis, TN, at the Arlington High School graduation ceremony held at a church. The embarrassing story and video went national.

It seems one family was saving seats for someone, but when another family tried to sit in them there were angry words and fists flying before security stepped in. This was all happening while the Arlington senior class was walking in and the ceremony had already started.

Saving seats is a long-standing practice and normally does not cause a problem of this magnitude for either party involved. But there is always the awkward feeling when some of your party are not there and you are trying to save them seats — and those you have informed that you are saving seats angrily move to another area to sit.

And then there is the situation when you have saved seats for your friends or family and they do not even bother to show up or call.

Can't we as adults stop these situations from happening?

When you coordinate a group for anything there will be differences of opinion on what is meant by arriving early, arriving on time and arriving late. Even when you spell it out in advance there can be a different understanding of the time schedule.

For example, my family gathers for vacations once or twice a year and we plan to leave together from one location for the trip. Invariably, there are early risers who sit and wait for everyone else to arrive. Then there are those who arrive with a few minutes to spare, as well as those who arrive right at the time we plan to leave. Finally, there are some who arrive late and we have to wait on them before departure.

Of course, the price for those who arrive late is that everyone reminds them of their tardiness at every opportunity during the trip. Ah, yes...family fun!

Are there remedies to this problem? Do you give those who chronically run late an earlier time to meet? Or do you wait to go in to an event until everyone in your party arrives?

I have experienced group dinners at restaurants where you are not seated until your entire party arrives. Perhaps this could be the solution. What if these families in Memphis were not admitted to the graduation ceremony until everyone arrived? Would that help or make the situation more difficult? Would the tardy family have arrived earlier if they knew of this type of policy?

Show some maturity. Before you gather for special occasions of any kind, try to work on communication and cooperation by all parties involved so there is no reason for arguments when someone is saving seats for others who could not arrive on time.

Plan ahead. Enjoy the event and savor the memory – not the black eye from a fistfight or ripped clothes from a shoving match that could have been avoided.

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