Look before you leap

He who answers a matter before he hears *it,* It *is* folly and shame to him.

Proverbs 18:13 (NKJV)

Members of a congregation falling asleep during a sermon is an occupational hazard for preachers. But one minister was surprised to see a man on the front row reading a magazine during his sermon. To be fair, it was a religious magazine – but nonetheless, the preacher thought it very rude. To make matters worse, this was the first time he had seen the gentleman and his companion (presumably his wife) in the congregation.

Frustrated he raised his voice and made some pointed remarks about paying attention – all to no avail. He determined to confront the man after the service.

Before he could say anything, the lady said how much she enjoyed the service. "I'm only sorry my husband, Frank, couldn't hear it. You see, he is almost completely deaf and couldn't hear what was going, but he loves the atmosphere and wanted to meet people. He is trying to lip read, but finds it hard going, so he brings along a church magazine to read."

The minister felt thoroughly ashamed of his thoughts.

There is wisdom in the book of Proverbs about this situation

He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him. Proverbs 18:13 (NKJV)

Do we always get the facts before we decide that what we have seen is the reality of the circumstances? If we see another person doing something that we feel is wrong, or inappropriate, do we assume we know *all* the facts before making a judgement call on the situation?

If we hear an accusation against someone else, do we assume it to be true – without checking the facts?

It is all too easily done.

Far better to check out – even if it means the embarrassment of asking the individual. Jumping to conclusions may make us look silly. It might harm a relationship. It could separate friends.

There's an expression 'look before you leap'. Maybe we should change that to 'think before you jump – jump to conclusions'.