

News & Notes

Sunday, February 27, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson; Terrell Ford; Mary Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Marion Smith, Janice Winstead's father; Ruby Street; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Alvie Williford; the armed forces.

Melba Cox received good news this past week and will not have to have treatments.

The **pantry item** this month for Pinevale Children's Home is laundry detergent.

The periodic **singing** at Briar Crest Extended Care will be this afternoon at 4:30.

The next **elders' meeting** is today at 5:00 PM. If you have anything you would speak with them about, please do so then.

There is a **sign-up list** posted on the bulletin board for anyone who would like to host a youth devotional in their home this year.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Worship: The Avenue of Communion (Luke 22:14-20)

PM: The Cautions of Fellowship (1John 2:15-27).

For the Record (February 20, 2005):

Attendance: 78 Contribution: \$1125.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025

ashlandcoc@juno.com

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

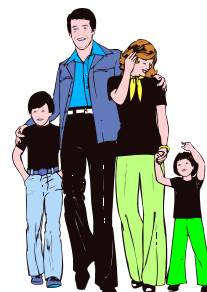
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Junior Roberson
Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

*"Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalm 96:7).*

Am I Doing My Part?

Jeremy Northrop

In Ephesians 4:11-16, the apostle Paul wrote, "[11] *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, [12] for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [13] till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; [14] that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, [15] but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- [16] from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*" There are a great many lessons the Christian can learn from this text.

First, the child of God can learn and understand there are different roles for each member of God's family. In this text, Paul mentions five groups of people or five roles that are given to the people of God. He mentions two that would have very little application in the 21st century and three that would have great application today.

The first group of people Paul mentions are the apostles. An apostle by definition simply means “one sent forth.” The 12 disciples that were set aside for a specific purpose by Jesus Christ were called apostles. They were given miraculous powers and the ability to pass on the gift of miracles. Simon wanted this ability and Peter rebuked him for his request in Acts 8:14-25. These men were to be the beginning of a large group of witnesses for Christ eventually spanning the entire earth (Acts 1:8). They received special power to aid them in accomplishing the task Jesus set forth for them to do.

The prophets of the Old Testament had a primary responsibility of proclaiming a message God had given to them. As part of that responsibility, the prophets were at times given special or miraculous powers to help them in their duties. The most notable of these powers was the ability to predict what would happen in the future. There were some prophetic events in the New Testament as well. Of course Jesus spoke of many things that would come to pass in His lifetime. It was revealed to John many things that would happen to the early church and he recorded those events so that they church could know what was happening to them.

The next group of people mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 4 are the evangelists. These would be the preachers of the gospel of our day or the ‘messengers of good’ or the good news (gospel). Phillip, one of the seven chosen in Acts 6, was an evangelist (Acts 21:8). Timothy was an evangelist given some specific instructions by Paul concerning how he needed to go about working in his ministry (2Timothy 4:5). Paul gave him some very specific instructions about his responsibility in proclaiming the word (2Timothy 4:1-5). Interestingly, today the roles of the evangelist and the pastor are often confused and skewed. Some people believe them to be the same person and have the same role. While an individual could be both the evangelist and the pastor in a local work, the two roles are very different in terms of duties and responsibilities. The foundation text of Ephesians 4 at the very least implies such.

The biblical view of a pastor is one who oversees or shepherds the flock of the local congregation. Paul gave some qualifications of pastors in 1Timothy 3:1-7. They are to be men of a special breed who can put into practice well the principles that children of God are to live by. In fact, in the New Testament, there are three different words used to describe these men each showing a different facet of their responsibilities. One of the key responsibilities of the bishop or shepherd is to teach the flock. This is part of the reason the pastors and teachers are mentioned together in Ephesians 4. Among other things, Paul says a bishop must be able to teach in 1Timothy 3:2.

The overall reason for the dividing of roles in the church is encouragement of the saints. The different roles in the church allow the work of the church to go on. It builds up the church and eventually will cause growth in the church. The implications of this point are obvious. If one does not fill his individual role in the congregation, then, the other members of the church are not encouraged and uplifted but rather discouraged. The church as a whole will be hurt if the people will not do what they are supposed to do. The old adage is true: a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

There is another purpose that each individual gains from working in the church. It helps aid in the maturation of each member. When each part of the body does its share, the body overall will mature and grow. It helps the church not to fall into apostasy. Paul says that each part of the body must fill its responsibility so that the group is no longer made up of children but rather spiritually-minded people who have grown into that role. Together, they can grow in unity and knowledge, in purpose and goals.

The overall conclusion is clear: if each person in the local work does not do his or her individual part or responsibility, it hurts the whole group. Thus, Paul made an appropriate analogy of the physical human body. When one part of the physical body hurts, the whole body hurts. Thus, each member needs to ask themselves: *Am I doing my part?*