

News & Notes

Sunday, October 30, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Al Alberson; Sandra Albertson; M. B. Anthony; Buck Brooks; Sally Etta Crawford; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Ricky Gore; Mamie Lee Grisham; Carolyn Jordan; Mary Sue Kidd; Ruth Ann Long; Deliah Mann; Charlie Matheny; Howard Moody; John Bill Richardson; Janet Rooker; Lillie Mae Shelby; Austin Simpson; Linda Smith; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Ollie Ursery; Betty Vincent; Lee Walls; Bob Weikel; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Bob Steel.

Pantry item for the month of October is dish soap.

Bobby Shelby came forward asking for forgiveness and wanting to be restored.

The **harvest festival** has been rescheduled for Friday, November 4 at 6:00 PM. Please give wrapped candy to Betty King for this event.

Sermon In Preview: Back to the Basics:

AM: Faithfulness

PM: Worship

For the Record (October 23, 2005):

Attendance: 70 Contribution: \$1308.00 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

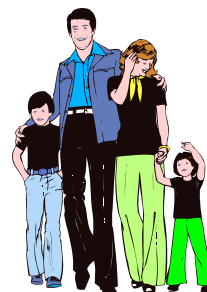
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

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

Gossip

Marvin Rickett

"Oh, you'll never hear one of us repeating gossip, so you'd better be sure and listen close the first time." This is a humorous by-line of the former television show called "Hee Haw." But the subject of gossip is really not that funny. It is another sin of the tongue. Jesus warned, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). We teach our little children to sing, "Oh, be careful little mouth what you say."

The word gossip is not found in the Bible. It is a Middle English word which means "indulge in idle talk or rumors about others." The Bible, however, uses other words which comprehend the sin of gossip. It is included in the "idle words" of which Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36).

The Apostle Paul uses the word "whisperer" to include a gossip. The Greek word psithuristas is an onomatopoeic word whose pronunciation sounds like the act of whispering. It is defined as "secret slanderer," "speak in one's ear." This is one of the sins man degenerated to when he left God out of his knowledge (Romans 1:29). It was one of the degraded

conditions Paul feared he would find in the Corinthian church when he came (2 Corinthians 12:20). The Wise Man noted that “a whisperer separateth chief friends” (Proverbs 16:28).

Another word used by the Bible that includes gossip is “talebearer.” In the Old Testament, Moses forbade a person to be a talebearer (Leviticus 19:16). The Wise Man pointed out the evil wrought by a talebearer (Proverbs 11:13).



The words “tattler” and “busybody” usually involve gossiping. Paul describes to Timothy how idle widows might become “tattlers and busybodies” (1 Timothy 5:13). The word for tattler is from a word which means “to boil up.” It is defined as “indulge in empty and foolish talk,” “talk idly, bring forward idle accusations, make empty charges.” The word for busybody simply means “busy about other folks' affairs.” These are things they “ought not” do.

The evil in gossip is that it causes strife, ruins reputations, assassinates character, and separates chief friends. Proverbs says, “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth” (Proverbs 26:20). In the church, gossipers have caused strife and division among brethren. It ought not to be.

Not all conversation about others is gossip. Some communication, and some kinds of communication, about people is essential and produces good fruit. It deteriorates into gossip when it becomes censorious talk, when it is basically a lie, or when it is an “inflated truth.” Sometimes gossip is an out-

and-out lie, with no truth to it whatsoever. More often, though, it is based on an element of truth, then gets blown all out of proportion. The real evil of this kind of gossip is the impugning of motives, the enlargement of the details, the addition of some fiction to enhance the drama in the telling.

Before one repeats something he observes or hears about another, he should stop and ask himself two questions:

(1) **Is it the truth?** Things are not always as they seem. The reality of a situation isn't always what it appears. One may not have the whole picture. We should consider the source and maybe modify the story. Perhaps we need to wait a while.

(2) **What good will it accomplish?** Will it bear some good fruit if it is repeated? Will it make someone a better person? Will it bring the offender to repentance? Will it forewarn and forearm the listener against some danger? Will it give the opportunity for someone else to help? If one cannot answer these in the affirmative, then the story should not be repeated. It may even be the truth, but if the telling of it harms rather than helps, then it should be allowed to die right there.

Women have the reputation of being the worst offenders in gossip, but men can be just as guilty. Yet, perhaps there is an element of truth to this. Men, by nature, tend to talk more about **things** when they get together in conversation; whereas women have more of a tendency to talk about **people**. A popular song of a few years back said, “As long as old men talk about the weather and as long as old women talk about old men.” However, gossip is a sin, no matter who engages in it.

“By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:37).