

News & Notes

Sunday, August 27, 2006

Remember in Prayer: Sandra Alberson; Melvin Bennett; Carrol Cherry; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Marie Hall; Carolyn Jordan; Dot Ketchum; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Lillie Mae Shelby; Calvin Ursery; James Williams; Charles West; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Terrell Hopkins.

Pantry item for the month of September is Velveeta cheese.

Ashland Events: Today: Singing at Briar Crest Extended Care@4:30 PM; Prayer meeting@5:00 PM; September 15@7:00 PM: Devotional and games for all kids ages 10 and under in the dining hall.

Area events: September 11-14@7:00 PM each evening: Gospel meeting at the West Amory Church of Christ with W. C. Edwards; September 30 beginning@9:30 AM: Ladies day at the Batesville Church of Christ.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: God's Plan for Fellowship (1Corinthians 1:9)

PM: Lines of Fellowship (Ephesians 5:11)

For the Record (August 27, 2005):

Attendance: 64 Contribution: \$1345.00 Budget: \$1352.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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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



ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14)

Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God
Let Us Help One Another — Fellowship

Jeremy Northrop

As we have done every first-Sunday-of-the-month this year, we turn our attention again to our theme for the year — Pressing Toward the Upward Call of God — taken from Philippians 3:14. First, let's review some of the things we have studied this year and the things which we plan to study in the months ahead in reference to this theme. Then, we will look at the focus which will begin today — reaching out. Finally, we will notice the things we will be focusing on today centering around the topic of fellowship.

Way back in January (is that too far back there for us to remember?), we discussed some introductory lessons for this theme. We discussed what pressing toward the upward call of God is, why we should do it, and how we plan to do it in 2006. In February, we began the first of three steps to help us press toward the upward call of God — reaching in — which focused on introspection. This included topics like humility, acceptance, and spirituality. More specifically, we examined the story of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), the question: Can God really forgive me?, and the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:28-42. These lessons provided a standard against which we can measure ourselves and determine if we are living the lives which God would have us to live. This process of introspection has hopefully helped us to make any necessary changes in our lives.

Then, in May we moved from reaching in to reaching up. In this phase of our study, we examined such things as dedication, allegiance, obedience, and growth. We examined the necessity of dedicating our lives to the absolute standard God has set forth.

Then we moved our study to look at why we should live our lives for God and the blessings which will come when we choose to do so. We also looked at reasons why we should follow the pattern God has set forth for our lives realizing that He has not given it to us because he wants our lives to be difficult but because He wants us to have rich and full lives. The last part of this phase of our study took at to the obligatory process for growth in God's kingdom. If a child of God does not grow, then he or she is dying spiritually.

Today, we will begin the third phase of our study — reaching out. This will consist of such things as fellowship, servitude, and evangelism. Through fellowship with each other we find that we all have a common goal and that it is easier to reach that goal together. One of the purposes set forth in the New Testament for God's people is benevolence (Galatians 6:10). Another purpose is evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20). There is no reason for God's people to be on earth if they are not going to share the jewel they have found in Christ.

On the first Sunday of December, we will bring the study to a close with lessons on application. We will have a lesson reviewing all the things we have studied. Then, we will be focus on the question: Where do we go from here?

As was mentioned, today we turn to the third phase of our study — reaching out. This will involve reaching out to each other, reaching out to people who have physical needs like food or shelter, and then reaching out to the greatest need of the world — salvation. The purpose of the church can be divided into four parts: worship of our great God, evangelization of the lost, edification of the saved, and benevolence of the needy. Worship is, of course, regulated in the Bible (John 4:24). Then, the other three are found in Ephesians 4:11-13 where Paul says,

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints [edification] for the work of ministry [benevolence], for the edifying ['building up' - ASV] of the body of Christ [evangelism], 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.

The next three months will focus on edification which begins with fellowship, benevolence, and evangelization.

Often times, when Christians talk about fellowship, they have one thing on their minds — food! We will use the word sometimes like it is a noun. “We are going to have a fellowship after services this evening” or “Please stay for the fellowship.” Such usage is not the best way to use the word. First, fellowship is a verb not a noun. It is something we do. It involves action. It is not an event to attend. Second, while brothers and sisters can indeed engage in fellowship while eating food, there are other times in which we can engage in fellowship, specifically when we worship together.

Acts 2:44 says, “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common....” Then in Acts 4:32, Luke records, “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.” Individuals in the first-century church shared the possessions they had. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira brought part of the proceeds of the sale of their land before Peter wanting to give it as part of what could be used by the church so that no one would have need. Unfortunately, they lied to the Holy Spirit saying that they were giving all of the proceeds when they were holding some back.

The context of Acts 2:44 can be taken back to verse 42 where the Bible says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” They had fellowship with God and one another by cooperative worship. The true fellowship hall of any church building is not where we eat a meal but rather it is the auditorium where we worship God. We have fellowship with God and with one another.

Finally, there are certain people with whom God instructs us not to have fellowship. Ephesians 5:11 is probably the most obvious passage to show such where Paul says, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” The goal for any Christian is to draw personal lines of fellowship where God has drawn His lines of fellowship.

Today, let's enjoy the day as we strive to learn more about God's plan for fellowship.