

News & Notes

Sunday, June 17, 2007

Remember in Prayer: Daryl Alberson; Mary Alberson; Steve Alberson Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Melba Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Gwynn Curtis; Lettie Mae Hunt; Janie Hurt Dot Ketchum; Tate King; Raymond Limming; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Shirley Ortiz; Forest and Cindy Phelps; Chris Spence; Jamie Spence; Ruby Tapp; Ron Tega; Calvin Ursery; Nancy Griffin Wamack; Mike Westmoreland; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the family of Rufus Miller.

Pantry item for the month of June is frosting.

Ashland events: Today: Singing at Briarcrest Extended Care beginning at 4:15 PM; July 15-19: Evangelism Seminar with Don Underwood;

Area events: Beginning today: Gospel meeting at the Ripley church of Christ with Wade Webster; June 22: The Danville church of Christ will host their sixth annual gospel singing;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Music in Worship: Historical, Biblical and Practical

PM: 2Corinthians: Holiness: The Character of Paul's Ministry (6)

For the Record (June 10, 2007):

Attendance: 84 Contribution: \$1331.00 Budget: \$1326.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street

spreading the Good News
Ashland Announcer

"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS..." (MATTHEW 28:19)

The Secret to Church Growth

B. J. Clarke

The secret to church growth is really no secret. It is plainly revealed within the pages of God's word. You don't have to travel hundreds of miles to a soul-winning workshop to unlock the secret of church growth. You don't have to travel to the bookstore to purchase the latest volume written to reveal the mystery of church growth. Just travel over to the bookcase, pull down your copy of the sacred writings, open it to the New Testament and start reading.

Read of the life and ministry of Jesus. Read of how Jesus preached peace and went about doing good (John 16:33; Acts 10:38). Read of how He demonstrated His love for the lost (Mark 10:21; John 15:13). Read of how He spoke the truth in love without ever compromising (Matthew 15:3-14). Read of the Jerusalem church and their common love for Christ and one another (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). Read of how the first century Christians went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).

Read of the tremendous sacrifices endured by the Apostle Paul so that the cause of Christ might be advanced (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). Note the duties and qualifications of elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13). Read the epistles to understand God's will for each member of the Lord's body. After you've read and read and read some more, read Revelation 1:3 to learn that just reading is not enough. We must read and then live out that which we have read.

What is the secret of church growth? When preachers speak the truth in love, (Ephesians 4:15) and reprove, rebuke and exhort with

all longsuffering, (2 Timothy 4:2) the church will grow. When elders shepherd the flock properly under the direction of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4), the church will grow. When deacons serve well, it will be well with them and the growth of the church (1 Timothy 3:13; Acts 6:1-7). When each member seeks to live like Christ and to love like Christ, the church will grow. Simply put, the church will grow when every part of the body does its share (Ephesians 4:16). This is God's plan and it will not fail!

Excuses for Not Taking in Spiritual Food

David Lemmons

Once I heard about an individual who had an esophagus hernia or blockage. That hernia was preventing food from getting to the digestive tract and thus to provide the body with needed nourishment. Obviously such a situation is a crisis and must be dealt with quickly. Have you ever thought about things that block our intake of spiritual food? Much of our problem in regard to spiritual nourishment is self-induced. We are not maturing spiritually because we are not taking in the needed spiritual food--**GOD'S WORD!** The reason, in large measure, for our dilemma is that we make **EXCUSES** for not feeding ourselves with God's word.

IT TAKES TOO MUCH TIME. Some will offer the excuse that Bible study takes too much time. All of us, without exception, have 168 hours in each week. Could we not give just 10% of that time to the Lord? That would be about 17 hours per week. If we figure 5 hours for assemblies. Then if we would devote just one hour per day to Bible study and prayer, we still would have 5 hours for visitation. It only takes 90 hours to read the entire Bible. Let's throw away the excuse: **IT TAKES TOO MUCH TIME.**

IT IS TOO DIFFICULT. Yes, it is true that the Apostle Peter said that there are "some things hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:15,16). However, noticing carefully Peter's wording, that very statement implies that the Bible is understandable. In addition, it is

implied that the majority of it is not in the **HARD-TO-BE-UNDERSTOOD**-category. Many Bible passages teach that God's word can be understood (e.g., Matthew 5:6; John 7:17; 8:32). The fact that we will be judged by the word of God implies that we can understand it (John 12:48). Surely we can throw away the excuse: **IT IS TOO DIFFICULT.**

IT IS TOO DISTANT—DOESN'T RELATE TO MODERN TIMES. There are some very real gaps between the modern student of the Bible and the time and place of its writing. Those events took place thousands of years ago. They took place in a different land. Cultures differ from those of Bible times. There is the language gap (Hebrew & Greek). There were even different plants and animals, and the laws were different. A student of the Bible must build bridges over all of those gaps. A helpful scripture is Psalms 119:89 – "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." Those bridges can be built, though, and we must throw out the excuse: **IT ISN'T RELEVANT.**

IT IS TOO DEMANDING. It is certainly true that it costs something to be a disciple of Christ. Read Luke 14:25-33. In this context, Jesus points out the absolute necessity of **COUNTING THE COST.** Surely we recognize that anything of great value is costly. Please read 2 Timothy 2:4 and Matthew 16:25-27. We are going to be rewarded according to our works. If we honestly consider the value of that reward, certainly we can dismiss the excuse: **IT IS TOO DEMANDING!**

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T LIVE IT. Read Luke 18:9-14. Notice also that God has "not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7,8). Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). God has not given us any commands which we cannot obey! Let's dump the excuse: **I'M AFRAID I CAN'T LIVE IT!**

Only when we have decided to do away with all of the excuses and get **BUSY** with the study (2 Timothy 2:15) will we be able to take in effectively the spiritual nourishment that our souls demand. Let's refuse to make excuses!