



The Link

Connecting
Church To Home

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The Newsletter of Bethel Free Will Baptist Church

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Pastor: Dr. Dave Nobles
Address: 3713 Pennington Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192
Email: bethel@bethelfwbaptist.com

Associate Pastor: Rev. Doug Snipes
Phone: 703-590-5199
Website: www.bethelfwbaptist.com

IS THE LOCAL CHURCH REALLY IMPORTANT?

In his book *THE KEY TO YOUR CHILD'S HEART* (Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas); Gary Smalley states that there was a time in his life when the family was not totally involved in church. This was due to the fact that his ministry changed and he became a missionary to families. This involved a great deal of traveling. Previous to this he had been an associate pastor and both he and his family were very involved in all activities of the local church. After the children were grown and began to express themselves, each said that the time when they were **not** totally involved and active in a local church was a hurt to them. They needed the discipline of the local church. This was a serious problem to them.

He goes on to make this evaluation:

"In some ways I felt that our family life substituted for the church: We had quiet times and devotions and prayer together. But for all the good things that came out of those experiences, I now believe that every family needs a strong local church. Our kids say they really missed the local church experience." [p. 129]

As I read this it really caught my attention. So many today are saying that family time is an equivalent to the involvement in the local church. The excuse is usually that families get so little time together in this rat-race of a world that two, three, or more times a week is just too much to ask. We have raised a generation of "Sunday-morning" Christians who consider it an inconvenience to be in the House of the Lord too often.

It seems quite interesting to me that these same folks usually have plenty of time for sports, a cabin in the mountains or on the coast, overtime on the job, little league ball, or some other activities. They will spend hours at the school in PTA or have their family join the local recreation club.

I am not saying that all of the above may not be good in their place. To let any, however, be more important than the public worship and learning about Him who saved us is an abomination. It not only is sin, but teaches the children, the next generation, that God is not really all that important. If this generation is a Sunday morning only crowd, what will the next generation be? Is the answer that they will not place God in their lives at all? Will we teach by our example that making money and playing games is more important than God and His church?

Of course, someone will say that they have a Bible study on Sunday night with the family at home and that is "their time." I remind you of the above statement of Gary Smalley. He stated that he had all those things and it just was not enough.

Why would we be surprised? Is not this the message that the Lord tells us in His Word? May I remind each of us of Hebrews 10:22-26 in which we are told that the assembling together is vitally important. We are commanded not to forsake that assembling because it is in that very environment that we both minister to others and are ourselves kept from going back into sin. Maybe church IS important after all!

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BETHEL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH
3713 Pennington Lane
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Upcoming Events

- MAR 6 Men's Prayer Breakfast 8:30AM in Fellowship Hall
- MAR 13 Daylight SavingsTime - set your clocks ahead 1 hour
- MAR 16 Angel Food Order Cut Off.
- MAR 20 Angel Food Order Pick Up 10:00 am -11:00 am
- MAR 20 Family Movie Night 6:00 pm, in the Auditorium

Weekly Schedule

SUNDAY

- Sunday School 9:30 AM
- Worship 10:30 AM
- Casa de Dios 1:45 PM
- Choir Rehearsal 4:30 PM
- Evening Service 6:00PM
- Bible Time (Grades K4-6) 6:00PM

TUESDAY

- Prayer Meeting (Casa de Dios) 8:30 AM
- Ladies Bible Study (Jodene Clark's Home) 6:30 PM
- Prayer Meeting (Casa de Dios) 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

- Youth Group (Auditorium) 7:30PM
- Bible Class & Prayer (Fellowship Hall) 7:30PM
- Kid's Time 7:30PM

THURSDAY

- Men's Bible Study & Fellowship (Auditorium) 7:30 PM
- Casa de Dios Bible Study (Fellowship Hall) 7:30 PM

FRIDAY

- Youth Group (Casa de Dios Fellowship Hall) 5:00 PM

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

- Ladies Bible Study (Fellowship Hall) 10:00AM

Of course, someone will say, "But I have not forsaken. There is no where that it states three or even two times a week." I must agree that it does not. Yet, the implication is that as often as we can, we should desire to be in the assembly so as to "draw near" unto the Lord. In fact, we are to do more of it as we see the day (day of the Lord) approaching. To forsake it is to say that it is not important enough; we have more important things to do.

Certainly, there are times of sickness and providential hindrance. There are those who work second shift jobs or jobs that require 24 hour duty such as hospitals, etc. That is not the issue here or our problem in the local church. It is the casual attitude concerning faithfulness that has become the normal, and not the exception.

We consider everything or anybody more important than being in the Lord's House. We must get back to the attitude of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." [Psalm 122:1]

One will say, "But preacher, There are times I don't get much out of church." Let's ask ourselves the question: When did church become a what-I-can-get activity? We come to the house of the Lord not only to gain, but to minister. Over and over in the Scriptures we are told that one gains by giving. The "me-first" philosophy is destroying not only the outside world, but the church. All too often we are not willing to be involved if it requires that we give something to gain something in return. This is, however, what being a servant of Jesus Christ is all about. I give as He ministers through me and, in the process; I gain far more than I give. Maybe we get little out because we put little in.

My dear friend, do not make the same mistake that Gary Smalley and his family made. It is true they were sincere and had pure motives. It is true that God did not strike them dead and condemn them to hell. Yet, they were the losers. **As your pastor, I do not want you and your family to be the losers! My greatest concern is that you will grow in Christ and, as Hebrews says, "draw near" to Him.**

I'll see you in church and Sunday School!!!!!!

—Pastor Dave Nobles

March Scripture

"A man's heart plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps."
Proverbs 16:9



Birthdays

- Mar. 4 Tommy Sawyer
- Mar. 8 Judy Jackson
- Mar. 8 Drema Yates
- Mar. 15 Russell Davis Jr.
- Mar. 16 Nicholas Porter
- Mar. 16 Vivian Jacobson
- Mar. 17 Ana Cueva
- Mar. 18 Rachael Jenkins
- Mar. 23 Ryan Jenkins
- Mar. 23 Grace Nobles
- Mar. 28 Zachary Drass

Anniversaries

- Mar. 1 Wayne & Karen Byrne

If we have missed your special day, please let us know!

The red-faced usher

When an elderly woman asked a church usher to seat her close to the pulpit, he tried to talk her out of it. "If you sit up front, you won't be able to sleep," he said. The woman looked the usher square in the face and asked, "Do you know who I am?" "No, I don't," he responded. "Well," she said firmly, "I'm the preacher's mother." Fully embarrassed, the usher asked, "Do you know who I am?" "No," she answered. "Good!" whispered the fellow. "Sit anywhere you want."

'Nones' are gaining ground

According to the recent "American Religious Identification Survey," 15 percent of Americans now identify with no religion. If the trend continues, experts predict that people with no religious affiliation could soon surpass the nation's largest denominations.

"Nones aren't a fringe group anymore and are now part of middle America," says demographer and study coauthor Ariela Keysar, quoted in USA Today last year. "They're present in every socio-demographic group."

Although "Nones" reject organized religion, half still believe in God or a higher power. Interestingly, Nones are the only major U.S. "faith group" consisting mostly of males. Lead researcher Barry Kosmin said people have many misconceptions about Nones. "They're not New Age searchers or spiritual or even hardened atheists. They're a stew of agnostics, deists and rationalists. They're skeptical about organized religion and clerics while still holding to an idea of God."

Hearing about all the "Nones" gives us even more reason to go out and share our faith with someone.

God's teaching is like....
In Deuteronomy, Moses' words to the children of Israel remind us of spring, which brings growth and new life.

Use the flower code below to fill in the blanks, revealing Deuteronomy 32:2, NIV.

CODE

"Let my teaching fall like

and my words descend like

like

like abundant

Answers: rain, dew, showers on new grass, rain on tender plants

DIRT CUPS

Make this easy snack for your family or your friends at Sunday school. As you eat it, celebrate the miracles God brings in the spring.

What you need:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 (4-serving size) box of chocolate instant pudding
- 1 (8 oz.) tub of frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (16 oz.) package Oreo cookies, crushed
- 8 (9 oz.) plastic cups
- gummy worms and frogs
- plastic flowers (optional)

What you do:

1. Mix milk and pudding in a large bowl. Beat with a whisk until well blended. Let stand 5 minutes.
2. Add whipped topping and half of the crushed Oreos.
3. Place 1 tablespoon crushed Oreos in each cup. Fill cups 3/4 full with pudding.
4. Top with remaining crushed Oreos.
5. Chill at least 1 hour or until ready to serve.
6. Decorate with gummy worms and/or frogs.
7. Place the stem end of the plastic flower into the center of the pudding dessert.