

# Elkton Communicator

A Publication of the church of Christ in Elkton, TN

29JAN2012

## *Men Privileged to Serve*

### Announcements

Jim Lovell

### Sunday Services

9 am

**Singing**— Mike Phillips

**Prayer**— David Beyer

10 am

**Singing**— Mike Phillips

**S. R.**— Burgess Cox

**Prayer**— Jarred Butler

**Sermon**— Joe Greer

### Lord's Table—

- Presiding

- Tim Burgess

- Chris Crabtree

- Serving

- Richard Parker

- Johnny Lewis

**Prayer**— Buck Smith

5 pm

**Singing**— Jimmy Butler

**Prayer**— Dick Sullivan

**Sermon**— Joe Greer

**Prayer**— John Bryan III

### Wednesday Bible Study 7 pm

**Singing**— Tim Burgess

**Invitation**— Joe Greer

*“The works of  
His hands  
are faithful  
and just.”*

*Psalm 111:7*

## Fellowship by Steve Dewhirst

One of God's greatest blessings is that of *fellowship*, both with Him and with each other as Christians. But just what does the term mean? It is often used in ways that fail to capture its true force and beauty.

Our English word *fellowship* is translated from two different word families in Greek. Though having differing shades of meaning, they both convey the idea of *sharing together* in something, of a *joint participation*, or of *contributing* to a common purpose. Fellowship involves an active involvement in things together. And fellowship is multidirectional. That is, we have a “vertical” relationship as individuals with God and a “horizontal” relationship with brothers in Christ.

The *basis* for biblical fellowship is a critical point to understand. It's not just that we *like* each other or that we may even *agree* on certain Bible principles. The basis for our fellowship with God is that we accept the eye-witness testimony of the apostles concerning Jesus and seek to live by it (**1 John 1:1-4**). Obviously, we cannot have any *joint participation* with God if we reject His word.

Likewise, our fellowship with each other is to be based on a common *sharing* of truth. We don't have the ability to read minds or know hearts absolutely as God does, but we give one another the benefit of the doubt. We accept as brothers and sisters fallible humans who are as imperfect as ourselves. But we trust one another to have a love for God that will cause each one to walk by faith. But it should be noted that *fellowship does not demand perfect uniformity on every Bible question* (see **Romans and 1 Corinthians**). What fellowship *does* demand, however, is that we be convinced of one another's faith and trust in God's word, then allow each to hold his own convictions.

The other area, in which fellowship must be extended or withheld, is in the local church family. In **1 Corinthians 5** Paul instructed the church to withdraw itself from a man living in open rebellion to the word of God. In another sinful case, **3 John** speaks of a man named Diotrephes who refuses to accept brothers who *should* have been accepted. It boils down to the fact that local churches have to make decisions about who will be accepted into their number. And a church has every right to refuse one it deems to be ungodly or troublesome. In the case of a man who has hopped from church to church to church, stirring up trouble and unrest in each place, brethren would be nuts to accept him!

But what about a case in which a man has been “withdrawn from” elsewhere? Is the next group he visits obligated to reject him also? No. Each local church is responsible for its own decisions. It may be that brethren reach the conclusion that the brother was wrongfully treated at the first place, and they would be right to accept him.

A local church is never bound by the judgments of another in the New Testament. Neither is “fellowship” among local churches known, except in the case of brethren sending benevolent aid to another in time of physical need. Occasionally one hears of a local church “withdrawing fellowship” from another local church. Such an action is completely without biblical warrant, thus rendering the “withdrawal” meaningless and silly. It belies the belief of some that we are all part of a “sect” of churches which must keep itself “pure” by eliminating any group not rising to our standards. Such thinking is unknown to God's word.

But after considering some of the ins and outs of fellowship, we should always emphasize the beauty and joy of it. God takes disparate men and women

*continued on the back ...*

*continued from the front ...*

from all backgrounds and makes us *one* in Jesus Christ. Those of us who once had nothing in common, now have the most important thing in life in common. Fellowship is a *sharing, a joint participation* in the life of discipleship and the work of the Lord. We worship God together, we encourage each other, we pray with and for each other, we see to one another's needs. In short, we share our lives as children of a common Father.

Biblical evidence points to the fact that most first-century saints were close to each other – and so must we be. We need each other. The very nature of discipleship calls for brotherhood and camaraderie. It's too difficult to walk by faith all alone. God has designed that we be *“built up in the most holy faith”* (Jude 20). And we are to help build each other. *“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity!”* (Psalm 133:1).

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## Think About It ...

*Why is it ...* that six preachers can preach contradictory doctrines at six different churches in town on a given Sunday and most people will say they are ALL wonderful preachers of gospel truth and that ALL six churches belong to the Lord? Yet, if one preacher preached the same contradictory doctrines in six consecutive Sunday sermons, people would say he could not be preaching the truth in ALL of the sermons and that the preacher must either be dishonest or incompetent. Think about it.

Ed Bragwell

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*When you are going through something  
hard and wonder where God is ...  
remember that the teacher is always  
quiet during the test.*

*(author unknown)*

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## News and Notes

- **Wednesday night assignment list**— Men ... please sign up for leading singing or doing the invitation.
- **Ladies Class**— Was postponed until this Thursday at 5:30 pm.
- **Singing**— At Oakland church of Christ, Saturday, 4FEB12. (flier on the bulletin board)

### SICK

- **Eli Williams**— (classmate of Kaleigh Butler) Eli is facing two very difficult issues. He is likely to have a shunt installed to help drainage from the brain and he will soon be starting radiation treatments. He faces a very difficult process of surgeries and treatments. Eli is the son of Vic and Kristie (Sharp) Williams and they ask for prayers. Here is his address ... **Elijah Williams c/o St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38103**
- **Gail Bailey**— (Melisha's mother) A mass of some type has been detected in the area of her heart that is causing pressure and discomfort. She will be consulting with a doctor on Tuesday to see about more tests. She requests our prayers. Gail's address; **24732 Windward Dr., Athens, AL 35613**
- **Josephine Solomon**— Is under-going several tests and wants us to keep her in our prayers.
- **Erica Butler**— Having concerns with heart palpitations and rapid heart beat. She is waiting for results after wearing a heart monitor and will be having other tests this week.
- **Jared Butler**— An MRI shows two bulging discs. Jarred is trying different methods of therapy to avoid back surgery if at all possible.
- **Others in our prayers** — Suzy Milligan, Betty Yant, Justin Ruf (working overseas), Edith Marie Wilburn, Sandra Davis, Reba Gordon (at Sunbridge), Rhenda Martin, David Bryant, Lillian Magnusson, Richard Patterson and Kathleen Hillis.