



FBC Focus

December 2015/January 2016 | Volume 15, Issue 6

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Adult Christmas Choir
Performance, Dec. 13*
*Rehearsal for Children's
performance, Dec. 18,
6:30 p.m.*
*Children's Christmas
Performance, Dec. 20*
*Christmas Caroling &
Pizza, Dec. 20, 5 p.m.*
*Rehearsal for Christmas
Eve, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.*
*Candlelight Christmas
Eve Service, Dec. 24,
6 p.m.*
*Combined Worship
Service (No Sunday
School), Dec. 27, 9 a.m.*
*Youth Group Winter
Blitz, Jan. 1-3*
Annual Meeting, Feb. 7

Fellowship Bible
— CHURCH —

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We don't have a prayer without Him

By Pastor Rodney De Ronde

If we are honest, prayer remains, for the most part, a mystery to us. We would all probably agree it is important and we should be praying more than we do. But still we struggle in our prayer life. In the next three Focus issues, I would like to try and bring some clarity to the subject of prayer by looking at Christ's prayer life. My hope (and prayer) is it will help us all have a greater burden for prayer in both intention and practice.

When we read through the Gospels, there are a handful of examples of when Jesus prayed. In Luke 9:16, we read of one of those instances. Luke writes, "And taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them." By itself, this verse doesn't say a whole lot except that Jesus prayed over a meal. You probably know when Jesus said this prayer he wasn't sitting in a corner of a cafeteria bowing His head over a Tuesday lunch special. He was in the middle of a hungry crowd of more than 5,000 people, all neatly divided into groups of 50, unaware that in a moment they would be the first to experience a "fast food" meal. While Jesus very much wanted to bless these people by relieving their hunger pangs, I think He had in mind an even greater purpose. He wanted to teach His closest followers, and ultimately us as well, about prayer. But He wasn't teaching them that talking to God was like speaking to the attendant at a drive

up window. Place your order, wait a few minutes, and then have your food handed to you without cost. Jesus had something with much deeper and wider implications. They needed to learn that the greatest need they had, if they were going to follow Christ, was Christ. That, at first, may seem like a strangely obvious statement. But I wonder if the reason we don't pray more than we do is because we haven't understood or accepted the obvious.

The feeding of the 5,000 in Luke is bookended by a mission trip and a cross. Just before the disciples found themselves in the middle of a small city of people, they had been "preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." (Luke 9:6) Jesus had sent the twelve out with only His "power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases." He had instructed them to take nothing else except, literally, the clothes on their backs. Did He ask them to do that because they were low on funds and couldn't afford to take anything more? Or because they wanted to make a statement to the poor so that they could identify with their pain and poverty? No, I think it was because He wanted His disciples to know that the mission was, is and forever would be only about Him. How and what they would do was to only be accomplished in the power and the resources available to them through

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Continue to pray for the Awana ministry

Our church family has been a great encouragement to me in how they are willing to invest in our children's lives through the many ministries of our church. We have seen children accept Christ as their Savior. Lives are being changed through relationships and God's word.

Awana is a great ministry that allows you an open door about every Wednesday night to share about Jesus Christ and what He is doing in your life. Please continue to pray that God would be working in the hearts of our families and community. May God bless all of you that are involved.

—William Chilcote, Awana Commander

Prayer reminds us of our need for Jesus

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Christ. It would take some more teaching by Jesus for them to get that and that lesson would come very quickly.

After they returned from their ministry trip, Luke writes Jesus “took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.” But the crowds weren’t too sympathetic to the disciples’ weariness and put the kibosh on their day off by following them to their retreat center. At some point, the disciples realized that they were burning daylight and ought to close up shop for the day so the people could get something to eat. Evidently thinking that Jesus wasn’t aware of the situation, they informed Him of the decision they’d unanimously come to. Seeing another opportunity to teach them the necessity of depending on Him, if one is going to follow Him, He answered with, “You give them something to eat.”

The right and proper response by the disciples would have been, “We can’t because we don’t have enough or what it takes. But we know you can, because you are the Christ of God. We learned that on our mission trip.” Instead of turning to Christ, in what would essentially have been a prayer, they looked to themselves and what was in their lunch bag and left it at that. Sorry Jesus, can’t do it, let the people go. What they had would never have been enough in their own hands and that was Jesus’ point in pushing their request back to them. In the same way that it only had been in His power and authority to preach and heal, it was only in that power they could fulfill His command to “give them something to eat.” They just needed to ask Him, but they didn’t and the rest is history. Jesus took the fish and bread, prayed “a blessing over it,” and fed a small city until they were satisfied. If only the disciples had prayed and asked.

Eventually the crowd did disperse, and they were able to get away. Luke describes the scene that followed the Guinness Book of Records sized picnic simply that Jesus was praying and the disciples were with Him. One almost gets the impression that it’s mid-prayer when

Jesus turns to His disciples to begin another lesson on what it means to follow Him. He asks them about His identity, which leads to a discussion on His eventual suffering, death and resurrection. Then, Luke writes probably one of the most neglected or ignored verses in scripture. Jesus says to His 12 students, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” This isn’t the place or my intention to fully flesh out the meaning and implications of this command for those of us who confess Christ, but it is worthwhile to consider it in light of our main point of dependent prayer.

Jesus had been trying to teach the disciples they couldn’t preach and heal in their own power. They couldn’t feed 5,000 people in their own strength. And if they still hadn’t gotten it yet, He drives home the point in the stark and dramatic image of a cross. If they are going to follow Him, they are going to have to surrender any and every form of self-reliance. The only way to guarantee there isn’t anything in them that would tempt them to rely on themselves is to consider it all dead. And dead means useless. If we need help to move furniture, we don’t go to the cemetery to look for volunteers. Dead people are worthless, if we want to accomplish something. We need to find someone who isn’t dead. That is Jesus’ point. People on crosses are incapable in their own strength to do anything. They can only cry out to another for help.

So as followers of Christ, where does that leave us? The answer: on our knees. When we deny ourselves, die to ourselves, the only option we have if we want to follow Christ — truly live — is to pray to the Resurrected One. The One who heals, who feeds thousands with a sack lunch, who loves enemies, who forgives, saves sinners, raises the dead... Prayer expresses the degree to which we understand how powerless we are to save ourselves or serve our King. Our prayer life reflects the height to which we’ve taken up our cross. Who or what else do we have but Jesus? Whether we’re praying to Him or not gives us the answer.

Help! I have a teen! By Pastor Georgie Filber

Parenting is hard. Parenting is long. Parenting is a struggle. This is true for parents with kids who play with toy trucks and stuffed animals, let alone when they begin driving trucks and using your cellular data.

The struggle can be even more difficult when we are trying to raise our children in a godly home, and they have grown apathetic or cold in their faith. Rob and Amy Rienow recently wrote a book to help parents in

Culture Newsletter

Another resource for parents of teens is the website Axis.org. Georgie recommends their free newsletter that “provides biblical insights into your student’s world” by explaining cultural trends and pop culture. You can subscribe by clicking on “Weekly Culture Newsletters” followed by “The Culture Translator.”

this situation. The book is worth the read for any parent with teens or even pre-teens. Let’s face it; even good Christian kids go through valleys in their faith. So, how can we help them?

In their book, *Five Reasons For Spiritual*

Apathy In Teens: What Parents Can Do To Help, Rob and Amy share their real-life struggles as sinful parents raising sinful children. Who can relate?

In each chapter, Rob and Amy do a great job of identifying symptoms, diagnosing the problem and then give practical solutions, along with real life examples of successes and failures.

Rob and Amy tackle questions like: How do I get past just managing my teens behavior and schedule? How do I get my son/daughter to be honest with me? How can I feed my teen spiritually? How can I pray for my teen? What are the secret sins my teen might be struggling with and how can I help? What if my teen has a rebellious heart?

The book is practical, simple, thoroughly Biblical and — maybe the best part — it is only six chapters and 80 pages. Pick it up today. The earlier parents have answers to these questions, the better prepared they will be. Enjoy the read!

News & Notes

Christmas Eve Service

FBC’s traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held December 24 at 6:00 p.m.

Individuals and groups are encouraged to participate with a music number or a reading. If you would like to participate, please sign up at FBC. A rehearsal will be held December 20 at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Caroling & Pizza

We are looking for more places to send our Christmas carolers. If you have a family member or neighbor who might enjoy carolers, please ask their permission and then share their name and address with the church office.

Caroling will be held December 20 at 5:00 p.m. followed by pizza. Please sign up at FBC so enough pizza is ordered. Treats are delivered to those we will be caroling to. If you would like to donate Christmas cookies or candies, please bring them the morning of December 20.

Marriage Sunday School Class

Beginning in January, there will be an adult Sunday School elective about marriage. *Love & Respect:*

The Love She Most Desires, the Respect He Desperately Needs is a book and DVD-study by Dr. Emmerson Eggerichs. Based on Ephesians 5:33, it strives to help couples understand why they sometimes react negatively to each other and how they can handle conflict quickly, easily and biblically. Watch for more details about this class.

Church directories available

The new church directories are available at the Connection Center. Those who had their picture taken have their directories labeled. If you did not get your picture taken, there are some extra directories available until they run out.

Custodian position open

A big thank you goes to Dale Wymore for his excellent service as our FBC custodian. He has stepped down, so there is now a job opening for this part-time position. If interested, stop by the church office for a job description and application.

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Wednesdays, 6:45—8:15 p.m.

December 9 — **Crazy Dress Night**
December 16 — Regular Meetings
December 23 — No Awana
December 30 — No Awana
January 6 — Awana Resumes
January 13 — **Family Pizza @ 5:45**
January 20 & 27 — Regular Meetings
February 3 — **Backwards Night**

This space intentionally blank. Please see a printed version of the newsletter for birthdays and anniversaries.

Youth Group Events

Dec. 6 Family Night, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
at FBC
Dec. 9 & 16 Youth Group
Dec. 19 Christmas Party, at Oskey
Christian Gym, 3:00–6:00 p.m.
Outdoor games, laser tag,
Christmas cookies & a hot
chocolate bar.
Dec. 23 No Youth Group—Winter
Blitz **Registration Deadline**
Dec. 30 No Youth Group
Jan. 1-3 Winter Blitz

Beth Moore event in Omaha

Beth Moore will be coming to Omaha for her “Living Proof Live” event on April 15-16, 2016. At this time, we do not have anyone to organize a group from FBC to attend the conference. However, we want to let women know that it is available. Ticket prices increase after January 29. You can find more information at: www.lifeway.com/Event/Womens-Event-Living-Proof-Live-Omaha-NE.