



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

PRAYER AS FELLOWSHIP

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Much of our activity in prayer will be dictated by our approach to prayer. How you conceive of the idea of prayer will govern what you do during your times of prayer.

Many people view prayer as a way to get things or to fix things. They have lots of needs, not to mention wants. Parts of their lives or the lives of their loved ones are broken and need repair. What do you do? You pray! It is the way to get things you want or need, the way to fix problems.

It is true that when we pray, God gives us what we seek in prayer. It is likewise the case that when we bring our problems to the Lord, He supplies solutions. But is that ALL that prayer is? Is that PRIMARILY what prayer is? Is prayer akin to thumbing through the yellow pages, or purchasing something from amazon.com?

The Biblical pattern of prayer shows us that it is more than just asking for stuff and seeking solutions. True prayer contains components that cannot be lumped into the category of "requests for help."

Take, for instance, prayer as adoration. In this type of prayer, we are recognizing and extolling God for His qualities and His greatness. "Oh Lord, You are a holy God and we praise you for your holiness." That prayer doesn't ask for anything – it just recognizes something to be true about God – it admires God for who He is.

Another type of prayer is prayer of confession – the acknowledging of our sins as sins, and seeking God's forgive-



ness, grace and help to overcome sin. There are requests there, but that is much different than asking for a new car, a bigger house, or a cure for the common cold.

Thanksgiving is yet another aspect of prayer that we often neglect. In some ways, this is the antithesis of "name it, claim it." Rather than asking God to give us things, we are thanking Him for supplying our needs. We are also thanking Him for who He is and how He cares for His people.

There is another concept that should govern our prayer – prayer as fellowship with God. This can even rightly be considered a primary idea about prayer which should transform our prayer lives. Prayer as fellowship with God.

When you relate to another person – whether it be a spouse, a parent, a child, a co-worker, a neighbor or just about anyone else – you are doing more than working them over to get what you want out of them. If the only reason you interact with another person is to secure some selfish benefit, then you're really engaged in manipulation rather than friendship.

Good relationships include an enjoyment of that other person, an entering into their life, their joys and their sorrows. We spend time with those folk, and being in their company is its own reward. So it is between God and the believer. Christians like to spend time with Christ simply for the joy of being with Him.

Jesus modeled this approach to prayer throughout his earthly ministry – He sought occasions for fellowship with...

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March 2013

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Mnemonics...

- Fellowship Lunch, 17th
- Pine Haven Men's Chorus, 17th
- Dessert/Game Night, 22nd

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A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 6, Sections 3-5

by Richard Steele

The Causes of Distractions, With Their Remedies

SECTION III. UNPREPAREDNESS

The third cause of distractions in the service of God, is, unpreparedness unto it. "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands to him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away; then shalt thou be steadfast." Job 11:13. First, prepare the heart, then stretch out the hands. He that keeps not his foot, when he goes into the house or service of God, is very likely to stumble, and to offer but the sacrifice of fools. He that is unfitted for any work, must needs be unfixed in it.¹ As holy Mr. Dodd used to say of afflictions, when they are prepared for them, they are like a sword that only strikes upon our armour; but when we are unprepared, they are like a sword striking on our bare skin. Even so, when the heart is well fixed and prepared for the Lord's service, an impertinent thought or suggestion falls on our armour, but when we come unprepared, it meets with our very hearts, and runs away with them. If a man come into a prince's presence undressed, unbrushed, or without his band, you may easily imagine how, when he is aware of the feathers or dirt that is about him, he is distracted; so is the soul woefully carried off, when approaching to God; the follies of sin and vanities of the world disfigure and divert it from a close converse with Him; and therefore a serious Christian doth not only pray, and watch in prayer, but watcheth unto prayer. We so eat our meat, says Tertullian of the primitive Christians, as remembering we must pray before we go to bed. And here I shall answer a necessary question, viz.

Q. What kind of preparation is necessary before our ordinary duties of worship?

A. 1. The light of nature teacheth us to prepare for every weighty action. Approaching to the Lord of heaven and earth is such. Who teaches the client to consider his case, when he comes to state it to his advocate or the husband- man to prepare himself for his tillage, or the poor suitor to weigh his request

that he makes to a prince Why, the light of nature teacheth this; and the light of scripture distinguished an upright man from a hypocrite hereby. "There are good things in thee in that thou hast prepared thine heart to seek God;" 2 Chron. xix. 3, there was Jehoshaphat. Again, "Rehoboam did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord." 2 Chron. 12:14. He sought God, it is likely, as many will do, but he cared not how he did it; and so though he did a good thing, yet, saith the scripture, "he did evil."

A. 2. Most certainly the Lord is a great God, who can raise or ruin thee in a moment, and whom the angels approach not without a profound respect; and so likewise duties of worship are great and weighty duties, wherein you transact for a kingdom, and plead or hear the cause that is for life or death. You drink a cup that will either mend or destroy you, and who is sufficient for these things? And it is manifest, that we are naturally unprepared, and to every good work reprobate. The posture of our hearts is inverted, and now they are open downwards, and shut towards heaven; all which if you place together, it must needs follow, that some preparation is necessary, even for the ordinary duties of God's worship.

A. 3. The hearts of men are of a different temper, and so are their occasion; the hearts of some are always in heaven, or else within a call; they are, as the apostle speaks, "Ready to every good work." Titus 3:1. When a duty of piety is offered they are ready to engage in it; when an object of charity is proposed, they are ready to distribute. And this present spirit is a great blessing, when holiness is so rooted and framed upon the heart, that God's worship is their element; the hearts of others, through custom, and supine negligence, abide at a great distance from God; no little effort will raise them, nor will they be brought in with many calls; like a great bell, they are hard to be raised; and as these have a greater unhappiness, so they have need of more pains to lift them for God's service.²

The occasions of some men will give them time enough to set their hearts in order, to state their

Wandering Continued...

soul's condition, and get themselves into a holy heat; and for them to come with cold and dead hearts into religious duties cannot be permitted. The occasions of others are so urgent and continual, that they have much difficulty to redeem time for prayer, and can hardly obtain a period of preparation, especially when a man is surprised with a holy duty, or in prayer at meals, or the like; and therefore one last may as soon fit all feet, as one particular rule suit with every Christian.

A. 4. The least measure of preparation that is necessary for the ordinary worship of God, is that the heart be called out of the world, 3 and made apprehensive or sensible of the nature of that God, and weight of that work that you are about; which if you can attain in a minute, or are of necessity straightened or surprised, you will be welcome to heaven; but if you can easily order your time, or not easily order your hearts, and remand your thoughts, you venture on your peril; and if God be not merciful, and you penitent, will carry away a curse instead you of a blessing. And so I conclude this answer with "let us have grace," not only a gracious habit but a gracious frame, "whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:28, 29.

Think it not much, therefore, to keep or get a heart prepared for the worship of God. When ringers set not in together, there is little but discord in that peal, but when they commence together, there is sweet music; and so it is when all the congregation set out, and take wing at once, it is music for heaven; whereas the heart that is not ready for the duty mostly produces discord and spoils the harmony. 4 And indeed this unpreparedness of the soul doth make the duty ungrateful to the worshipper. When a friend comes upon you, and you are not prepared, no provision or rooms in readiness, how comparatively unpleasing is his visit, and distracted his entertainment when to him that keeps a constant table, or hath made set preparation, the sight and conversation of his friend is

very sweet; so it is between our God and us; when the rooms of the soul are prepared, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, laid up for our beloved, how can we welcome our Maker on his own cost into our souls? whereas Christ himself hath but cold welcome, and distracted entertainment in an unprepared soul. Lift up therefore thy heart in the porch of a duty, with "turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way." Psalm 119:37.

*"...for if the
holy work
you are
about be
worth the
consuming of
your
time...surely
it is worth all
your pains &
diligence."*

SECT. IV. LUKEWARMNESS

The fourth cause of distractions in God's worship is lukewarmness.⁵ He that is intense in any thing hath few thoughts to spare. Distractions are but the idlings of the heart, he that runs, looks at nothing but the goal; though he meet passengers, or pass by palaces, he is in earnest and stops for nothing; it is he that walks at leisure who turns his eye to every trifle, and descants on every object, because he is not in haste. Even so the zealous soul, though he forgets not those things which are behind, yet reaching forth to the things that are before, presseth towards the mark; he hath business in hand which concerns eternity, and he cannot stand to whisper with every passenger, nor trifle with every object. It is the lukewarm heart that is prone to that ; he can pray to God, and dress himself at once, he can hear God and talk with men, speak about heaven, and contrive about the earth; and in a word, serve God and mammon at the same time. Good Jacob was little troubled with wandering thoughts, when he had "by his strength power with God, yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed, for he wept and made supplication." Hos. 12:3, 4. Tears are the best charms to chase away distractions. While you labour and weep, and pray, wandering thoughts will flee away.⁶

As there can be no reason given for any sin, called therefore folly, so for this in special; for if

Wandering Concluded...

the holy work you are about be worth the consuming of your time, which passeth in every duty, and is most precious, surely it is worth all your pains and diligence. He that loseth his time in the duty, and loseth his soul by his lukewarmness in the duty, makes a madman's choice. For if the sermon, prayer, and chapter, be not worth thy labour, never attempt it; and if it be, never shrink, nor be indifferent about it. When you see a man freezing at his work it invites a passenger to entertain him with talk. And a frigid attendant upon God tempts the devil himself to tempt him.

Wherefore the apostle, Rom. 12:11, directs us to be fervent in spirit while we are serving the Lord; not drowsy, but fervent in spirit, or boiling hot, as the word signifies. The busiest flies will not meddle with the scalding honey; though the sweetness entice them, yet the heat lenifies them. The base flies of thy distractions will not molest thy heart, if it keep boiling hot in the service of God. A warm and weeping prayer is the true holy water, which scares away the devil.

Now the best remedy against this lukewarmness is, 1. Consideration, and 2. Practice.

1. Consideration of the inefficiency of a frozen duty, which seldom reacheth the heart of God, when it reacheth not our own. That the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent only take it by force. That such duties neither please God, nor ourselves; they mock God, and rather deceive than delight us. That some prayer or sermon must be thy last, and perhaps this present may be it. That it is an irrational thing to bring; a dead sacrifice to a living God. That one serious and lively duty does you more good, and leaves a more sweet, blessed and active frame upon the soul, than a hundred heartless services; and in short that the Majesty whom you serve loves adverbs, and narrowly observes the hows and whys of sacred worship; " that it is not a vain thing that you are about, for it is your life." Deut. 32:47.

2. Practice is the other remedy. To cure this

lukewarmness in God's service, frequent those heights that are burning as well as shining. Let us go to Dedham, said the godly in that time, to fetch fire, when the famous Mr. Rogers was there. If you cannot hear a warning divine, then read such, and be sure to have some books for the rousing and heating of your heart, as others for clearing and instructing your judgement, unless the work of sanctification be perfect already in your heart and affections, while it remains imperfect in your mind and judgement. Associate also with zealous Christians, borrow some

*"Associate also
with zealous
Christians,
borrow some
of their heat
and lend
them some of
your light."*

of their heat and lend them some of your light; and be not ashamed to talk of God, heaven, and the soul, when you are together; you lose the benefit of men's graces, for want of broaching those blessed vessels of grace you converse with. Especially read the scripture, which will inflame thee, and mould thee, being rightly used, unto its blessed nature. I have known some, who before their private duties would meditate on a verse in the Psalms, Canticles, or the like, and then hasten warm and lively into the presence of God. And choose rather to be frequent and fervent than long and roving in a duty. Shorter prayers may sometimes inflame, when long ones tire the spirits; and that way the ancient saints in Egypt used to take. And lastly, do as holy David did,

who carried such a nature as thou dost, be ever calling to God, as he who is at it eight or nine times in Psalm 119 " Quicken me in thy way, quicken me, and I will call upon thy name;" and if he had need thus to fetch fire from heaven, how much more have we?

Q. Were it not better to omit the duty, than attempt it with such a dull heartless frame as this ?

A. 1. Omission of a duty will never fit us for the better performance of it. Luther used to say, The oftener I neglect, the more unfit I am; this is nothing but a device of the Devil.

2. If thou endeavourest with thy utmost strength and sincerity, though thou be dull, it is better than to leave it undone; for as one sin prepares for

Wandering Continued...

another, so one duty prepares for another. Fall therefore to work, and when God has engaged to help thee: never think neglect will mend it; one sin never cures another. By the upright use of these means, you will find the Holy Ghost, as it were, stretch himself on your cold hearts, and infuse life and heat into you. And when you are soaring aloft in the spirit, that cunning marksman cannot shoot, and fetch you down by his distracting arrows.

SECT. V. WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS

The fifth cause of distractions in God's worship, is worldly-mindedness. A heart in earth and a heart in heaven are far asunder. As long as the lark soareth upward, she sings without danger of the net; but stooping to gaze on the fowler's deceitful glass, she is quickly ensnared. So is it with us, while we live aloft, we are safe; but when the heart stoops down, and grows worldly through the false glass Satan puts upon it, then are we taken in these snares. "With their mouths they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Ezek. 33:31. Their faces look one way, but they row another; their eyes are up towards heaven, their hearts set on the earth; and grasping two affairs they prosper in neither. How should he set his affections on the things above, that hath set them chiefly on things below, when as these two are directly opposed? Col. 3:2. How should the soul, that bird of paradise, fly up to heaven in a duty, when it is not only weighed down with the lead of natural corruption, but entangled in the lime-twigs of earthly-mindedness? They can never write on their duties. Holiness to the Lord, that stamp upon their coin, God with us. Hence it comes to pass, that the heart is loth to come to an ordinance, and then longs to go out again; how heavily do they go to church, how lightly to the market? for here the heart goes with them, and there it is left behind; and being forced into a duty, because its treasure is in the world, the heart hastens to be there again, and is out of its element when in an ordinance. 7

We read of the "world set in a man's heart," Eccles. 3:11, and of "a heart set on the world." Psalm 62:10. Now how should God have any part of such a

heart 1 No, no; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; there he can rest without weariness; of that he can discourse without distractions; but when he should turn to God, and flee to heaven, this care knocks at the door, and that business whispers him in the ear, and there the carcass is left, but the heart is gone. The prophet tells us, that "whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart." Hosea 4:11. It were very unlikely that any man in the heat of those sins should pray, or hear, or meditate aright; and it is no more likely for a heart that is taken away with the cares of this world, and drowned therein, to converse with God without innumerable wanderings.

Mistake not: it is not the world, but worldly-mindedness that is taxed; not the increase of riches, but the heart set upon them. 8 And so, no doubt, a poor man may have his part of distractions, through his want of worldly things, as well as the rich through his abundance. He may have many a distracting thought what to do for the world, as the rich man hath what to do with the world. And thus we see those things which were given for our welfare, prove our snare; and what should hire us to serve God, keeps us from him. Which shows what reason the wise man had to crave neither riches nor poverty, but convenient comforts, seeing the weight of the world distracts one sort, and the want of the world another sort, in the very immediate service of God. Howbeit, for the most part, the heart that is fullest of the world is emptiest of God.

Now the best remedy against worldly-mindedness is mortification. O get a view of Christ's cross, whereby the "world will be crucified to you, and you to the world." Gal. 6:14. So was Paul. As saith Chrysostom, Paul and the world were like two dead bodies, that neither embrace with delight nor part with grief from each other. You must be dead, I say dead to the world, if you mean to live to God, or live with him. A drunken prayer, and a worldly prayer, are alike devout. Therefore, 9 "Love not the world, nor the things of the world," for so long the love of the Father is not in you; and if you love him not, how should you pray to him? It would be an ill-favoured sight, to behold all this congregation in their workday clothes here; how unpleasing a sight to God

Wandering Continued...

is it, to see us all with our work-day hearts! Now that you may be rid of an earthly heart, faithfully make use of these directions.

1. Get faith to believe the report God hath given of the world, that all that is in it is but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; a poor vain thing, not able to give the soul a breakfast; 10 This all that have tasted it, and Christ also, do ever; and canst thou find that in it, which none ever yet found? will it do more for thee, than ever it did for any one else? Believe its vanity upon God's word, ere thou prove it by thy sad experience.

Get faith to derive the virtue out of Christ's death to vanquish it. "For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5: 4. Lay thee down with Christ in the grave by faith, and say then. What is the world? Get faith to believe that eternal happiness, which being once seen by that piercing eye, would so disgrace the world, that all the comforts of it would not weigh a straw in comparison of it. 11 If a man lived in the sun, what a trifling object would the whole earth look! He that lives in Christ in heaven, by faith, sees all the glories of the earth with a disdainful eye, and cries, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

2. You may be helped against this disease, by deep consideration of the folly and misery of such a frame of heart. It is folly, for all that is gotten of the world, with the neglect of the soul, invasion of holy duties, or by a carking worldly heart, comes to thee in wrath, and will sink thee deeper in hell; or if thou repent, is, most commonly, some way consumed. If we could penetrate the method of God's providence, usually those losses you have in this beast, or the other house, or the like, are the just value of what you have gotten by immoderate care, hard dealing with others, or unseasonable contrivance, when your heart should have been better employed. And then the misery of worldly-mindedness, that it "pierceth the heart through with many sorrows." Sorrow and pain in getting, sorrow and care in keeping, sorrow and grief in losing. The heart is never at perfect rest. A man would not use his horse, as a worldling doth his heart, who gives it no quiet or ease, and all this to no purpose at all. "The people labour in the very fire, and weary themselves

for very vanity." Hab. 2:23. And may not the consideration hereof be an effectual means to promote hatred to this humour ¹ and when it is once hated, it is more than half discharged.

3. Have recourse to God by prayer, and therein see and bewail thy former madness; solemnly vow to restore their right to every man thou hast wronged; rather part, like Zaccheus, with half thine estate, than with thy whole soul and body; and earnestly cry unto the Lord, "to incline thine heart to his testimonies, and not unto covetousness." Psalm 119:36. Entreat your heavenly Father to give you a heavenly heart, and if it come not at first asking, it is a gift worth going for again; humbly tell him, by virtue of that covenant wherein you promised to forsake the world, which you are now resolved to adhere to, his Majesty is bound to give you a mortified and heavenly heart, and you will never leave him, till you have obtained it.

4. Draw your hearts from worldly thoughts when you go to the worship of God. "The preparation of the heart is from the Lord: commit thy ways to him, and thy thoughts shall be established." Prov. 16:1, 3. The heathen left their shoes at the temple doors, to intimate that all earthly affections must be left behind, when men go to speak with God. Do as that great statesman used, who would lay off his gown, wherein he administered his office, when he went to worship God, and say, "Lie there. Lord Cecil;" implying, he would take none of the cares of his office into the presence of God. So when you go to prayer, reading, or hearing, lay aside the world, and say. Lie there house; ye fields lie there; lie there my cares, till I have done with God. So "Abraham left his servants and asses below the hill," Gen. 22:6, and took up nothing but a holy heart, and the materials of his sacrifice, with him thither. Keep still an eye upon your hearts, and both "watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

¹ Hence David ; Psalm 57:7, 8; so Deborah, Judges 5:12.

² In such case meditation, like a dish of water, may set the pump a going, yea, foul water may bring up fair water. — Bishop Hall.

Wandering Concluded...

³ Prov. 18:1. If thou canst not always have separating time betwixt other occasions and God's worship, yet have some separating thoughts ere thou enter upon the duty.

4 When you have prepared your hearts, God will pass by great imperfections, 2 Chron. 30: 18, 19, and you may then do much in a little time. Psalm 10:17. Thou hast prepared their hearts, then whilst thou cause thine ears to hear. — Burrottghs.

5 This night past, as I was awakened out of my sleep, the devil came and intimated, that God was far from me, and heard not my dull prayers; so I said. Well then, so will I cry the louder. — Luther. And when he found his spirit out of frame, he would never give over praying, till he had prayed his heart into that frame he entreated for.

6 Birds will not light nor stay on flaming sacrifices.

— While. Where could a wandering thought get into that most zealous prayer ? Dan. 9

7 See a plain instance hereof in that hearer. Luke 8:13, 14.

8 Water under a ship helps it, but water in a ship drowns it.

9 Let not the world be your familiar friend: familiar friends will come in without knocking. — White.

10 When we shall have reigned hereafter many millions of years in heaven, what thoughts will remain of this little inch of time upon earth? — Bolton.

11 Let their money perish with them that esteem all the gold in the world worth one clay's society with Jesus Christ, said Galeacius to a nobleman, who tempted him to apostatize with a great sum of money.

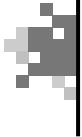
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...His Father in heaven. We get a look into this in His great High Priestly prayer in John 17. Consider how Jesus relates to His Father in these words:

John 17: ¹Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ²even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵"Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Is that how you pray? Is prayer an opportunity for fellowship with God? Or do you view prayer as a convenient way to secure things you want and need?



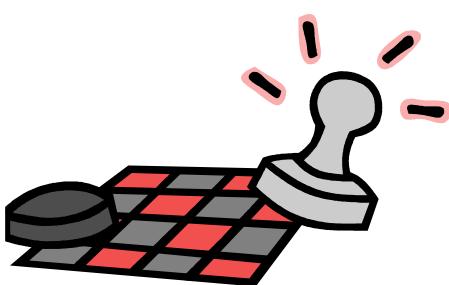


March Birthdays



Dessert & Game Night

Everyone is invited to a Dessert & Game Night held on Friday, March 22nd at the church. Bring along your favorite game or games to play!

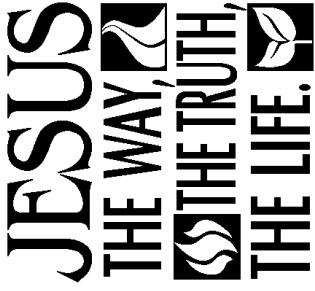




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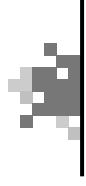
Show ing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 | 4 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. | 5 | 6 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m. | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 Missions Sunday | 11 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study</i> , 1:30 p.m. Theology Class, 3:30 p.m. | 12 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m. | 13 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m. | 14 | 15 Presbytery in Orland Park, IL | 16 Presbytery in Orland Park, IL |
| 17 Fellowship Lunch (a.m.) <i>Pine Haven Men's Chorus</i> (p.m.) | 18 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Men's Chorus</i> (p.m.) | 19 | 20 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m. | 21 | 22 Dessert/ Game Night | 23 |
| 24 | 25 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study</i> , 1:30 p.m. Theology Class, 3:30 p.m. | 26 | 27 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m. | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 Lord's Supper (a.m.) | | | | | | |



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Gardening Anyone?

The time is approaching for Spring planting! Let Gail Moody know if you want garden space on our church property so we can plan accordingly! (Hopefully our woodchucks will not come back ☺)



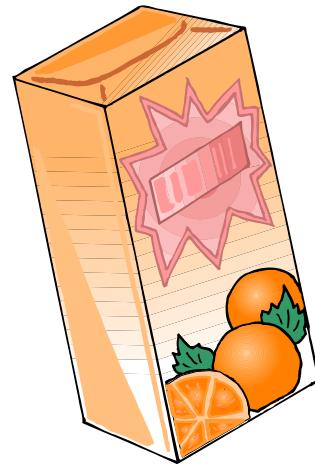
Fellowship Lunch

Everyone is invited to a Fellowship Lunch which will be held at the church after the Sunday School hour after morning worship on Sunday, March 17th.



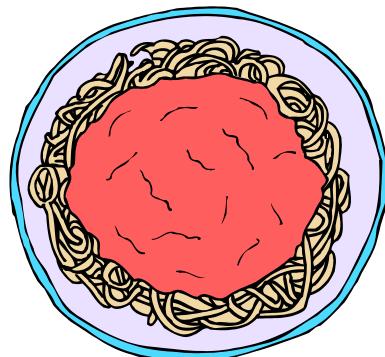
VBS Craft Need

Do you drink orange juice from cardboard orange juice cartons? If so, they are needed for a craft project for this coming year's Vacation Bible School. If you can help in this, please give all used cartons to Sara TenPas! Thanks so much.



Italian Night

Please Save the Date! The Pine Haven Auxiliary's Italian Night dinner will be held at the First Reformed Church in Cedar Grove on Tuesday, April 16. Mark your calendars now!





“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.

You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”





Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon

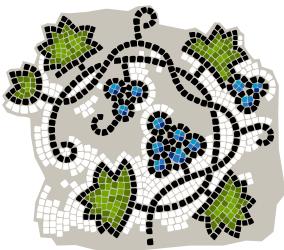
Corner

"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house."
(Psalm 36:8)

Sheba's queen was amazed at the sumptuousness of Solomon's table. She lost all heart when she saw the provision of a single day;

and she marvelled equally at the company of servants who were feasted at the royal board. But what is this to the hospitalities of the God of grace? Ten thousand thousand of his people are daily fed; hungry and thirsty, they bring large appetites with them to the banquet, but not one of them returns unsatisfied; there is enough for each, enough for all, enough for evermore. Though the host that feed at Jehovah's table is countless as the stars of heaven, yet each one has his portion of meat. Think how much grace one saint requires, so much that nothing but the Infinite could supply him for one day; and yet the Lord spreads his table, not for one, but many saints, not for one day, but for many years; not for many years only, but for generation after generation. Observe the full feasting spoken of in the text, the guests at mercy's banquet are satisfied, nay, more "abundantly satisfied;" and that not with ordinary fare, but with fatness, the peculiar fatness of God's own house; and such feasting is guaranteed by a faithful promise to all those children of men who put their trust under the shadow of Jehovah's wings. I once thought if I might but get the broken meat at God's back door of grace I should be satisfied; like the woman who said, "The dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table;" but no child of God is ever served with scraps and leavings; like Mephibosheth, they all eat from the king's own table. In matters of grace, we all have Benjamin's mess—we all have ten times more than we could have expected, and though our necessities are great, yet are we often amazed at the marvellous plenty of grace which God gives us experimentally to enjoy.

Evening, March 4, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Pine Haven Men's Chorus

The Pine Haven Men's Chorus will
be at Grace church on Sunday evening,
March 17th at 5:00 p.m.

