

The Oologah Informer
May 19th, 2013

What I Learned With A Small Country Church
By Don Boyd

From the Blue Springs Church of Christ bulletin 5/12/13

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Service Times

Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 A.M.
Worship: 10:30 A.M. & 5 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7 P.M.

Preacher:

Russ Earl

Announcements:

Russ Earl

AM Sermon:

Guest Speaker: Jeremy Northrop
(2 Corinthians 2:5-8)

PM Sermon:

Guest Speaker: Jeremy Northrop

Sunday AM Bible Class:

Guest Speaker: Jeremy Northrop

Wednesday Bible Class:

The Christian Do's – Swearingen

As most of you know I was out of town last Sunday through Wednesday doing a gospel meeting at the Pineridge church of Christ in southern Missouri. There were some things that I learned there that I want to share with you. Some of these things I had experienced before and some I had forgotten.

I learned that there are still those who will travel miles to hear the Word of God, no matter what day of the week it is. The church building there is out in the middle of nowhere, yet people drove over thirty miles over winding roads to hear God's Word proclaimed by someone they had never heard of before. The couple I stayed with drove for an hour to get to services. They did that because of love for the truth. They were all hungering and thirsting after righteousness and wanted to be filled with God's Word (Matthew 5:6).

I had forgotten what it was like to have a building full for a gospel meeting. The record attendance at the Pineridge congregation was listed as 42. There were 40 there Sunday and many more there Monday–Wednesday. In a county with a population of just over 9500, there were 50-60 there each night. What would that be like in Jackson County where there is a population of over 675,000? It seems that we have lost our hunger for the Word of God. We sometimes like to snack on it, but we have lost our desire for the Word (1 Peter 2:2). The reason I say that is because when I go to gospel meetings in our area, there are usually few visitors from other congregations (ours included) and not very many of the members of the congregation where the gospel meeting is held are there either. We do not have to travel very far to go to the gospel meetings in our area, so why are we not there? Could it have something to do with what we are seeking in this life (Matthew 6:33)?

I learned that no matter what may be happening in a person's life, if they desire to be present when the gospel is proclaimed, they will be there. There were several in attendance that were in very poor physical health, yet their desire was to hear God's Word (Romans 10:17). One man in particular was there every opportunity, except Sunday afternoon, even though he had just recently had back surgery, had to use a walker, and sit in a chair in the middle aisle. He always said that he was privileged to be there to hear God's Word. Another man had a severe disease where he was losing the lining covering his nerves and was there one night. He was a visitor from another congregation. Several other examples could be given. I was informed that every member but three that attended Sunday morning were there every night of the meeting. One couple was in their nineties and did not get out at night, another was a young man who was there two nights, but had to go to Arkansas. Why was there so much dedication to and interest in God's Word? They want God's Word to lead them to heaven (Psalm 119:11, 15-16, 38, 41, 50).

I learned that hospitality is alive and well. I was made to feel at home from the first moment I stepped into the building. Everyone came to speak to me and tell me how much they appreciated me being there. How often do we do that for our visitors? If all of us spoke to all of our visitors, that would make them feel welcome and at home. We can overwhelm them with hospitality. One of the qualifications given for an elder is “given to hospitality” (1 Timothy 3:2). Most of the qualifications of an elder are also qualifications of a Christian, and “given to hospitality” is one of them (Romans 12:13). We can all break out of our shells and talk to our visitors if we want to.

I learned that advertising the meeting and knocking doors before a meeting makes a difference. One lady in particular came up to one of the men of the congregation, told him her name, and said, “You gave me a flyer.” She came because the congregation was involved in getting the word out (Mark 16:15-16).

I learned that people get involved in the lesson. Everyone was turning the pages of their Bibles, or keeping up on their electronic devices, taking notes, and listening intently (Acts 17:11). Only one or two nodded off, and that was because of age or medication.

I began to wonder why it is the case that we do not get involved when the gospel is being taught, whether here or at other congregations. It seems that we are so busy in our lives that we do not take time for God’s Word any more. We have ball games, scouts, practices, school activities, and on and on. We all know how much more important those things are than God’s Word is to us. And that is the problem. We no longer allow God’s Word to be the lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path (Psalm 119:105). It is a hindrance to what we really want to do. How can we expect to hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21) when we are not a good and faithful servant? We need to examine our lives and make sure we are being faithful, and not just part-time Christians (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Yes, I learned a lot with a small country church.

Announcements

Service Times

Don’t forget tonight our evening service time has been changed to 7pm!

Food Pantry

We had a good turnout for our food pantry. We are thankful that Bro. Jeremy Northrop was able to have a lesson with our food pantry visitors.

Fellowship Sunday

Our monthly fellowship meal is today after morning services. Please plan to stay after morning services to enjoy this time of fellowship.

Family & Marriage Seminar

All of the lessons presented during this seminar will be on our website and are also available on DVD or CD.

Recent Prayer Requests

Shirley Lusk – Sister of Darla, had an infection and is now under hospice care.

Kenny (Patti Payne’s husband) – is having heart problems.

Daphne Miller – (the great granddaughter of Walter & Charlotte) is gaining weight and continues to improve.

Please keep the following in the prayers.

Ed & Barbara Coats

Ruth Corbett

Allen & Joyce Cash

Mary Ann Haugh

Emma and Ruth (Darla Smith’s sister)

John Babb

Jerry Watson – has been responding well to treatments.

Kennedy Cox

William Claxton’s family and friends (many are in need of prayers)