



PRAYER REQUESTS

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 19

MAY 6, 2012

- **Mark McCollum, Reagan Kenyon, Pam Richard's Parents, Sasha Tompkins & La Donna Gammill** all need your prayers as they continue to seek great results.
- **Bobbie Wright** had a serious fall and is in the hospital in Albuquerque. Keep this dear sister in your prayers.
- Beverly and Clifford Gunn, Robyn Drake, Judy Roybal, JO Vick, Dick and Judy Bird, Belle Yokum, Willie Johnson, Larry Reeder, Koben Puckett, are all in need of prayers.

Announcements

- **Mark McCollum** has prostate cancer and also has some additional cancer in his spine. He will be undergoing some highly aggressive treatment during the week and then be home on the weekends. Keep **Mark** and **Kim** in your heartfelt prayers.
- On **Wednesday** evening we will meet at **7 PM** to continue our study of church leaders from history. This has been fascinating, so please join us.
- **Gary Gaitner** passed away this week, so keep his family in your prayers. The funeral was on Saturday.
- Congratulations to all of our **Foxes** and **Vixens** as they emerged the state champions in track this last week in Albuquerque.

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- We are collecting donations for graduation gifts for **McKayla** and **Meagan**. You can give your donations to **Clara Oliver** or **Patricia Miller**.

Benevolence Update

We are collecting **Kool-aide & Cereal** for the Portales Christian Children's Home this month. As we joked last week, this is the breakfast of champions :-)



Silas Shotwell will bring the lesson today

Men Serving this Month

- **Announcements:** Les Miller
- **Scripture:** Les Miller
- **Song Service:** To Be Announced

Happy Birthday

May 3— John White

May 10— Lorraine White and Scott Lewis

Anniversaries—

None this week

Calendar of Events

TODAY— plan on enjoying a fantastic time together whether you remember to bring a dish or not; there will be plenty.

May 13— Mothers' Day Sunday

May 16— Working for the Master

May 20— Baccalaureate, 6 PM at the school main gymnasium. Our congregation needs to provide some cookies for this reception..

May 25— Graduation, 7 PM at the school main gymnasium

Greater Things: Fellowship by Phil Ware

"It" is talked about more than baptism or communion in the New Testament. "It" was practiced widely in the early churches in greatly different cultures as well as among different races, languages, and social classes of people. "It" was a key component of the first followers of Jesus as they lived out their faith daily in the dawning weeks of the early church.

Yet somehow, we have let the "It" we are talking about mean little more than coffee and donuts shared among light acquaintances on Sunday morning. Sure, some of us have small groups or Bible classes that are supposed to help with this "It." Yet when we are honest, somehow the shared life of Jesus' early followers where we find "It" has been lost to slogans and easy grip and grin sessions among church people who are little more than strangers -- except for the fact that they gather in the same big box together for an hour or two on the weekend.

The "It" is fellowship. For most of us, this is little more than light social visiting with folks who share a common faith and a common location for a certain bit of time during the week. Yet look at how it is defined in the early days of Jesus' disciples as they were experiencing "greater things":

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved ([Acts 2:41-47](#) NIV).

Notice a couple of key phrases:

"... about three thousand were added to their number that day." – We can't let ourselves off the hook because our churches are large!

"They devoted themselves to ..." – This is not a simple work-it-into-my-schedule-somewhere add on to our lives, but a committed lifestyle of devotion to Jesus and each other ([Acts 1:14](#); [Acts 2:46](#)). "All the believers were together and had everything in common." – This is life shared together with each other, and we see it again and again ([Acts 1:14](#); [Acts 4:32-37](#)). "They sold property ... to give to anyone who had need." – They pooled their resources so they could take care of their own in poverty and facing hard times, something widely practiced in the early churches ([Acts 4:32-37](#); [Acts 11:27-30](#); [2 Corinthians 8:7-15](#); [James 2:14-18](#); [1 John 3:16-18](#)). [Before you go on, PLEASE take a minute and really read these passages that speak of this radical kind of shared life in a wide variety of early churches.] "Every day they continued to meet together ..." – They met in public places in big groups and in house-to-house groups to share their lives with each other ([Acts 20:20](#)).

So the natural outgrowth of "It" -- this genuine fellowship -- was the opportunity for the apostles to do mighty wonders and signs, as the early church enjoyed the favor of all the people, and former unbelievers came to the Lord each day and were being saved. These are some of the "greater things that Jesus had promised to do through them, and us, if his followers will ask him ([John 14:12-13](#)).

Our hearts yearn to go deeper. Most of us want to be part of "greater things" than simply a big church show each week. Our spirits ache to have soul-to-soul level friends who share faith, life, and a desire to experience God's family in authentic ways. **So why do we settle for so much less?** Are we too lazy, bored, busy, afraid of commitment, disappointed, selective, or afraid to invest in life that is shared with others who follow Jesus? Do we want a dose of religion and just a taste of fellowship rather than the genuine sharing of our lives?

Of course there are a host of other reasons we don't move fellowship beyond coffee and donuts in the foyer or an occasional meal with people we know from church or our small group. But, deep down, isn't there a yearning for more in your heart ... a yearning for greater things ... a yearning that requires a greater investment than simply playing church or being critical of church and piddling along at following Jesus on your own?

As you listen, I'm willing to bet you are going to be shocked about how much there is about life together and what we're missing and some simple, everyday things you can do to make a difference in your own little part of the big family of God. "They devoted themselves to ... fellowship!" **Will we? Will I?** I hope so, because most of us genuinely want "greater things" than what we're experiencing now.

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URL: http://www.heartlight.org/articles/201205/20120506_greaterfellowship.html

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Check out our web site for electronic versions of the newsletter and other resources to support your walk with Jesus—

<http://fortsumnerchurchofchrist.com>