

Church Life News

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First Christian

CHURCH of VISALIA



Mike's Musings

We have several Home Study Groups studying A.W. Tozer's book "The Pursuit of God," and I am also delivering messages on Sunday relating to each of the chapters in the book. During our study of chapter four, "Apprehending God," one of my Home Study Group members asked a very good question, "What does the church do to help Christians 'apprehend' God better?" Their reference to "church" was general, but lets get specific, "What is First Christian Church doing to help people know God better and develop a deeper relationship with Him?"

Some churches have developed discipleship programs with different steps in a process, like Christianity 101, 102, etc., which are great, but the challenge is to get people to attend. It is hard to disciple people who don't show up. The other weakness I see in many of these high-speed discipleship programs is that they teach you a lot about Christianity, but the whole point of the faith is not simply to know about God, but to know God...in a real and personal way.

My belief in just about any area of our lives, whether it is sports, career or our faith, is you need to master the basics before you waste your time on all the gee-whiz stuff. If you don't have a relationship with God, or don't even know you are supposed to, then having all kinds of biblical and theological knowledge is sort of irrelevant.

This is where Tozer comes in. His book, "The Pursuit of God," is a timeless classic because it hits at the very foundation of our faith, having a real and personal relationship with God. Everything in our life is subordinate to our understanding of God and the quality of our relationship with Him. That is why we have Home Study Groups going over the book, and since we

aren't going to get everyone in the church in these groups, I share the message of the book during Sunday worship.

To disciple Christians, which means helping them to become more like Jesus, is not simply a matter of classroom study. I am absolutely convinced that more discipleship takes place when you are serving others than you could ever get from sitting in a nice comfortable classroom...no matter how many Bible studies you take. After all discipleship is about "being" a Christian, not merely "thinking" about being one. This is hard for me to say because I would be more than happy to simply sit in my office to read and study, but I know being a good Christian requires bringing Christ into the presence of others...whether it be in a hospital, a soup kitchen, etc. Yes, it would be easy to be a studious monk, but that is not what God is calling us to do.

So if you want to grow in your relationship with God let me recommend some other discipleship programs we have, like Stephen Ministries, AWANA, Youth Group, Jesus Street, and those are just some of the options within our church, because you also have organizations like the Visalia Rescue Mission or Care Pregnancy Center that would love to have your help as well.

To really have the mind of Christ requires us to understand the hard sayings about, "denying oneself," "Looking to the needs of others as more important than your own," or "He who wishes to be greatest in the Kingdom of God must be the servant of all."

I believe the church has an important responsibility in assisting others in their efforts to "apprehend God," yet many times the greatest lessons come in ways difficult for us to accept.

Youth Ministries

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children...But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people." Eph. 5:1a, 3 (NIV)

You may have heard it said, "Imitation is the greatest form of flattery." Well it is true. When you look around the world and even the church who and what are we imitating? Is it a TV show, movie, or rock star? Do we imitate the fashion advice we see on shows like, *What Not to Wear?* Are we imitators of authors like Beth Moore,

Kevin Lehman, Rick Warren? Are we imitators of neighbors or friends or are we imitators of God? The true answer is not what you think but what your life shows. How are we showing God we trust Him, rely on Him, and think He is awesome? We are dearly loved children. We have a Father in heaven who does what is best for us. He is always there for us and never leaves our side. He shows love and concern; He is holy and just. Of all the things to imitate I would say He is the best. All other options will fail us, but not God. Answer these questions above and decide who you will imitate.

Calendar:

Sunday School – 9AM

*Church Service – Sundays 10:15AM following Sunday school
Youth Band/Drama Team – Sundays 5-6PM*

Sunday Night Sanctuary (SNS) – Sundays 6:30PM – 8PM Junior High & High School (Lesson Separate)

The Breakfast Club – 6:30AM for high school juniors and seniors – We sometimes change locations so let us know if you want to come.

February 3rd – youth worship band leads worship and special music in church service

WarCry Conference – Fresno February 22nd – 24th. We will be going together on Saturday if you wish to go with the group. It is a free event, but registration is required.

Stephen Ministry - "Caring Ministry Workshop"



Caring Ministry Workshop March 1, 2008

Registration: begins at 8:00AM

Workshop: 9:00AM to 1:00PM

Location: First Christian Church

Cost: \$15 per person or \$50 for groups of four or more.

(Members of First Christian Church are invited to attend for free!)

Stephen Series Caring Ministry Workshop

Christ at work in and through gifted, well-trained lay people that's the Stephen Ministry vision. This half-day event will show you how to make that vision a reality. In three practical sessions, you will receive a sample of

Stephen Minister training and go home with hands-on ministry skills you can use immediately. You will also learn more about the life-transforming benefits of Stephen Ministry.

In just a few hours—

- Gain valuable, practical caregiving skills you can use right away
- Taste the depth and quality of Stephen Ministry training
- Learn how Stephen Ministry can result in:
 - a. Gifted lay people, organized and equipped for meaningful ministry
 - b. Pastors supported by a team of well-trained lay caregivers
 - c. Church members receiving quality Christian care during a crisis
 - d. The unchurched touched by Christ's love in times of need
- Catch a vision for beginning Stephen Ministry in your congregation

Each participant will take home an

84-page workshop manual and a detailed information packet about Stephen Ministry. Each congregation will also receive a copy of The Heart of Stephen Ministry video (available in VHS or DVD format).

Session 1: Ministering to Those Experiencing Grief

This Stephen Ministry training session will teach you how to better care for those who are grieving, from their time of loss through their grief journey. You'll also experience firsthand the depth and quality of Stephen Minister training.

Session 2: An Introduction to the Stephen Series

Get an inside look at Stephen Ministry, the lay caring ministry used in thousands of congregations. Learn how it works, the resources it provides, the benefits it brings, the changed lives that result—and the steps your congregation can take to get involved.

Session 3: How to Care in a Distinctively Christian Way

In this second sample from Stephen Minister training, explore what distinctively Christian care is and learn a powerful principle that will enable you to use most effectively the caring tools God has given us.

February Birthdays

Amanda Stevens	3	Kay Fox	13	Justin Black	25
Madison Droney	5	Julia Huff.....	14	Michael Gunning.....	27
Glen Wells	5	Sue Geis.....	15	Joanne Hazen.....	27
Bill Chandler.....	6	Klarisa Mina	17	Morrie Trent	27
Lisa Hardisty.....	6	Irene Slocum.....	18	Connor Jameson	28
Amanda Blackburn	7	Jon Shacklett.....	21	Cheyenne Whitley	28
Marcia Moore	7	Tim Glick.....	23		
Stephen Stoner.....	9	Robert Baxter.....	24		

February Anniversaries

Bob & Donna Eastin.....	2	Pete & Erin Sheaff.....	17
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Discipleship

JESUS STREET CHANGES

This past Sunday we expanded the age for Jesus Street. Jesus Street is a children's worship program offered during the regular worship service. Children begin worship with their families and then are called forward for the children's blessing and then excused to go to Jesus Street. Currently, **children from 4-10 years old are able to**

attend Jesus Street during the worship service. If you choose to send your child please remember a couple of things.

1. Fill out a green registration card (found in the pews) **ONE TIME ONLY** and send with your child when they go to Jesus Street. Instruct your child to give it to his/her teacher. This

information is helpful in an emergency.

2. Please pick up your child immediately after worship from the Jesus Street room on the south side of the building. Children are to remain in the classroom until parents pick them up.

EXPELLED: "No Intelligence Allowed"

WHO: Ben Stein, in the new film **EXPELLED: No Intelligence Allowed**

WHAT: His heroic and, at times, shocking journey confronting the world's top scientists, educators and philosophers, regarding the persecution of the many by an elite few.

WHEN: Coming to a theater near you Spring 2008

WHERE: Ben travels the world on his quest, and learns an awe-inspiring truth...that bewilders him, then angers him...and then spurs him to action!

WHY: Ben realizes that he has been "Expelled," and that educa-

tors and scientists are being ridiculed, denied tenure and even fired – for the "crime" of merely believing that there might be evidence of "design" in nature, and that perhaps life is not just the result of accidental, random chance.

First Christian Church of Visalia

January Attendance

January 6	117
January 13	114
January 20	104
January 27	126

January Giving

January 6	\$9,740.20
January 13	\$3,459.64
January 20	\$4,093.75
January 27	\$1,472.32

February Ministers

Deacons		Elders
Dave Barber	Feb. 3	Roger Johnson
Sabrina Barber		Ann Johnson
Chris Black	Feb. 10	Gigi Shacklett
Jennifer Black		Richard Shacklett
Don Jones	Feb. 17	Kevin Guy
Peggy Jones		Carrie Guy
Dana Switzer	Feb. 24	Marsha Jepson
Freddie Trent		Lance Jepson

February Drivers

If you need a ride to church during the month of February please call one of the people listed below:

Tami Tharp	592-1406
Betty Baker	734-2806
Wanda Sharp	732-0836

"And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory."—Exodus 33:18.

1 Cor. 12:7-10 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom, through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another the gift of faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues."

We as a church have decided that it is time to seek the Lord. Like Jesus we understand the time in which we live. Jesus knew that he had to work the works of Him who sent him while it was day because the night was coming when no one could work. Some are involved in an A.W. Tozer small group others are reading his book and diligently studying the Scriptures quietly at home, all desiring to know the Lord intimately.

There are pockets of miracles happening all over the world and people are seeing the supernatural power of God which causes us, when we hear about them, to want more than what we have previously experienced.

What do we know about gifts, especially the working of miracles? Do we need this gift? While doctors seem to be discovering many helpful procedures these days, there is still a long list ofsorry, we don't have an answer for this. Some are just told to go home there is nothing that the doctors can do for them.

When you see the anxious faces of those on street or in the marketplace, does your spirit cry out, "Oh Jesus please help them". Since God manifests Himself through the gifts of His Spirit, are we willing to press in to receive what He has for us? Are we seriously panting like a deer pants for water from the brooks of the *Living Water*? One thing we know we won't need the gifts of God's Spirit in heaven...so they must be for us today. Are we crying out for more boldness, more healings, more miracles, more souls, more signs and wonders?

We have decided to follow Jesus, and there is no time to turn back. God's spiritual eye has always been focused upon those who needed a Savior. God ordains circumstances so that those who desperately need to see that God is alive can see his glory. He never turned away from the sick, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame or the demon possessed.

God's plan was always for his church to be his ambassadors to carry his Word with holy boldness and set the captives free. He is calling His body to task! Each one has to be at work, if we expect to see the miracle working power of God in our midst. Creative miracles get attention from the saved and the unsaved.

What do you think church...is it time yet? Can each of us say, "Lord have Your way with me, I am following You with my whole heart? Dear Lord, may we see Your glory fill Your house we pray. In Jesus Name Amen

Joyce

Prayer Concerns

Health

Judy Addison
 Joyce Allen
 Lisa Ann Bachman
 Kay Bartell
 Audrey Bass
 Jenn Blackburn
 Betty Cates
 Bob Eastin
 Donna Eastin
 Kristie Evans
 Kelli Fetcho
 David Huff
 Marsha Jepson
 Don Jones
 Thell Maynard
 Loreen Moore
 Frank Morales

Thelma Mortenson
 Glenn Pratt
 David Smith
 Jean Stevenson
 Glen Wells
 Charles Williams
 Michelle Glick
 Joan Willis
 Roxie Wilson
 Kole (child)(brain tumor)
VBS Prepare Hearts of:
 Attendees, Members, Workers, &
 Families
Restoration
 Steven Stoner
Accident Recovery
 Kariel Young (Fragile)
Military

Lane Boland
 Matthew Calhoun
 Ervin Edwards
 Nikki Walz
 Casey Wightman
 Cody Wood
Working of Miracles
 Jesus Banuelos
Comfort for Family & Friends of
 Mary Baker
 Charlotte Elliott
In God's Care
 Alberta Wells
 Henry Wells
Missionary
 Misheck Kanake
 Nation of Kenya: food, fuel supply,
 protection & Peace



1023 N. Chinowth St.
 Visalia, CA 93291-4114
 Phone: (559) 732-6623
 FAX: (559) 732-6625

Website: www.fccvisalia.org

*Biblically Based
 Christ Centered
 Spirit Led*

Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

Staff E-Mail Addresses:

Michael Messinger, Senior Pastor
 pastor@fccvisalia.org
Joyce Hogan, Pastor's Assistant
 pa@fccvisalia.org
Carrie Guy, Youth Pastor
 youth@fccvisalia.org
Will Shattuck, Music Director
 music@fccvisalia.org
Sheila Ronk, Church Secretary
 sec@fccvisalia.org

If you have questions contact Carrie or Joyce at the Church Office — 732-6623

Kingdom Kids News

Where a kid can be God's kid!



February AWANA Schedule - We will be having a store for all the kids on the 6th. On the 13th we will celebrate Valentine's Day with a party and Board Game Night. The 20th will be our next award night and we invite parents to come honor your child's accomplishments. The 27th will be a regular schedule night.

Kingdom Kids Programs:

Sunday School—9AM Sunday Mornings
 Jesus Street—During Church Service (10:15AM Sundays)
 AWANA—Wednesdays 6-8PM

Jesus Street Now Goes Up to 10 years old!

Children ages 4-10 will be dismissed during the morning worship for their lesson time.

Don't Forget—Kids get **KINGDOM BUCKS** for coming to and bringing friends to Sunday School and Church. We have 4 classes for children and youth during Sunday School. High School meets in room 122, Junior High meets in 128, K-2nd in room 124, and 3rd – 6th in 123. Hope to see you there!!!!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Christian Church
 1023 N. Chinowth Street
 Visalia, CA 93291-4114