

A Strong Sense of Family

By Neal Pollard

Trevor Matich was being interviewed on ESPN radio, asked about why he thought that Clemson had built such a strong football program in the last few years. His quick response was, "They have built a strong sense of family." He talked about how Head Coach Dabo Sweeney and his staff wanted players to see their coaches not just as coaches but also as husbands and fathers. Consequently, the coaches' families spend a lot of time around the athletic facilities or hanging out with the players. They have intentionally built a strong family environment that doesn't compartmentalize but rather coalesces. Recruits talk about sensing it when they make a visit, but, more importantly, players on the roster speak just as strongly about it.

How many teams make such an emphasis isn't clear, but you don't seem to hear that said often enough. While I find such human interest stories heartwarming, it makes me wonder, "Do people describe our congregation with similar terminology?" Are we creating, developing, and nurturing a strong sense of family?

The early church definitely majored in that priority. From the time the first church of our Savior was established, we find this emphasis (Acts 2:42-47). Often, New Testament writers spoke of the church with family terminology (Eph. 2:19; 3:15; 1 Tim. 3:15; 5:1-2; Ti. 2:1-8; etc.). The church exists as a subcommunity within the broader community around them. People from that broader community are looking for greater intimacy and meaningful relationships. One place they often turn is to various churches. Whether through our efforts to evangelize or through their seeking that brings them within our walls, we have an opportunity to expose them to a "strong sense of family."

But, by being faithful to New Testament teaching, we offer this in the context of truth rather than error. We cannot settle for simply offering truth, as eternally vital as that is. Along with it, we must love, embrace, and work to incorporate them into our family. God has His church designed to follow His written will in the context of a tight-knit, spiritual family. A true sense of family will draw them into a relationship with us. It will better open their hearts and minds to being drawn into a relationship with Christ. The net effect will be greater than a national championship. It will be many, many souls won to eternal life. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity to be spiritual family!

Neal Pollard preaches for the Bear Valley church of Christ in Denver, CO

Schedule of Services:

Greeting: Tom

Song Leader: Myron

Opening Hymn:

55—Take Time to be Holy

Opening Prayer:

Robert

Hymn:

561—It Is Well With My Soul

Scripture Reading:

Gary

Hymn:

293—Night, With Ebon Pinion

Lord's Supper:

Mark & Ryan

Hymn:

273—O How I Love Jesus

Sermon: Tom

Invitation Hymn:

596—God Is Calling the Prodigal

Closing Hymn:

27—Be With Me Lord

Closing Prayer: Ray

PRAYER LIST

- *Ryan was well enough to be back with us last week.
- *Mark's grandson, Connor, is at home and doing better
- *Ron and Pat
- *Juanita and her family.
- *Dale's friend Zarna and her family.
- *Larry and Ruth are on vacation.
- *Dale, his mother and his cousin Jayna and her family.
- *Ray, Rebecca, and Steven.
- *Our congregation
- *Our Veterans
- *Our Nation

CALENDAR

- Apr. 28—Bible Study 10 am
Mark
- Apr. 28—Worship 11 am & 6 pm
Speaker: Tom
- Apr. 30—b. Breana
- May 1—Bible Study 7 pm
Rob
- May 3—Friday Night Sing
Tri-County
- May 5—Bible Study 10 am
Mark
- May 5—Worship 11 am & 6 pm
Speaker: Tom
- May 5—Business Meeting
- May 8—Bible Study 7 pm
Rob
- May 8—b. Lisa Marie
- May 10—Friday Night Sing
Carrollton
- May 12—Bible Study 10 am
Mark
- May 12—Worship 11 am & 6 pm
Speaker: Tom
- May 15—Bible Study 7 pm

A Church Grows

Acts 2:40-47

ACCORD	AMONG	ANYONE	APOSTLES
BELIEVED	BREAD	BREAKING	CHURCH
COMMON	CONTINUING	DIVIDED	DOCTRINE
EXHORTED	FELLOWSHIP	GENERATION	GLADNESS
HAVING	HEART	HOUSE	OTHER
PEOPLE	PERVERSE	POSSESSIONS	PRAISING
PRAYERS	SAYING	SIMPLICITY	STEADFASTLY
TEMPLE	TESTIFIED	THROUGH	TOGETHER
WONDERS			

D G T D H A H H A E S O Y N D T H D
 I S N O O E M N G T S T E E W H N E
 V R O I A C Y O E U I H V L G L O I
 I E G R U O T A N C O E A P D L I F
 D D T L N N D R I G I R Y M R E T I
 E N C E A F I L I L R D H E P F A T
 D O E I A D P T E N V E E T E D R S
 H W I S S M N B N W E T H L R O E E
 R D T W I E R E E O B R L T V A N T
 P L E S U O H T S I C O Z E E P E D
 Y P R A I S I N G S W H A N R G G D
 C O M M O N T H A S T X D A S D O A
 S E L T S O P A H Y A E Y H E R B T
 P O S S E S S I O N S E O C U O T T
 G N I V A H P D A E R B H R R C E E
 E L P O E P T H O S U S A U N C D S
 O U L G N I K A E R B S W H E A R E
 A D D G N I Y A S E D T O C T H E M

Hidden Message: _____

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Answer to Puzzle: Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. John F. Kennedy

SUNDAY: Bible Class — 10:00 am; Worship — 11:00 am; Evening — 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study — 7:00 pm
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E-mail: Church_of_christ@roadrunner.com
Pod Cast: Chardon.podbean.com