



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

May 22, 2016

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Elders:

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Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

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‘GOING TO CHURCH’

Many reasonably good people seldom, if ever, “go to church.” Meeting with others to study the Bible, God’s Word, and to publicly worship Him is something easily ignored in our busy world. To these, church is where you go for a wedding or a funeral, but little more.

The early Christians didn’t just “go to church” – they were the church. They were the ekklesia, the “called-out-ones,” called out of the world by the gospel of Christ to be a light to the world. They were a community of believers, commonly referred to as “the body of Christ” and even “the bride of Christ.” In Christ, they were bound together in “*one body. And one Spirit...one hope...one Lord, one faith, one baptism*” and “*one God.*” (**Ephesians 4:4-6**). As such, to not meet with other Christians to encourage one another and jointly express their devotion to the Lord was not considered an option.

Had not the Lord said, “*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*” (**Matthew 18:20**)? Had He not instructed them in the partaking of the Lord’s Supper, saying, “*This do in remembrance of me*” (**Luke 22:17-22; I Corinthians 11:23-26**)? From the first, the church, consisting of penitent baptized believers, “*continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*” (**Acts 2:42**). **Acts 20:7** tells us that “*Upon the first day of the week...the disciples came together to break bread.*” Christians who were becoming neglectful were admonished, “*Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching*” (**Hebrews 10:25**).

Christians are not called to be “lone rangers” in a world hostile to God, but to be bound together with brothers and sisters in Christ in a common struggle. Sharing together in worship and in the word of God should be something much desired by those who love the Lord.

Bulletin Digest
via Arthur church of Christ, Arthur, IL

CAN ANY GOOD COME FROM STRESS?

Samuel was one of the best men in the Bible. We read about his good life of faith and justice in **I Samuel**, but it is a statement made hundreds of years later about him that tells us just how godly a man he was. In Jeremiah's day the people of Judah were so wicked that no amount of praying could save the nation from punishment. God even told Jeremiah not to pray for them (**Jeremiah 11:14**). To make this point stronger, God said that even if Moses and Samuel were alive and pleaded with him to spare Judah He would not (**Jeremiah 15:1**). When God wanted to use two people as examples of godliness, He chose Moses and Samuel.

Samuel was a great man in spite of unfaithful men who were close to him. He was brought up from a young age with Eli in the service of the Lord at the tabernacle. Eli was not a just man, but Samuel grew up to be one of the most just men in Scripture. Samuel's two sons were wicked, but he did not let them pull him down to their level. He maintained his integrity to the end (**I Samuel 12**).

The story of Samuel happened because of a great prayer. His godly mother Hannah in that prayer vowed that if God would give her a son she would give him to the service of the Lord all the days of his life (**I Samuel 1:11**). The Lord heard her prayer and gave her a son, and that is how the story of Samuel began.

Hannah's prayer for a son was no light request. It was, as James would later say our prayers should be, an "*effectual fervent prayer*" (**James 5:16**). "*And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore*" (**I Samuel 1:10**). The anguish she felt in her soul drove her to her knees. Some of the most memorable prayers in the Bible and some of the most earnest prayers in our lives are offered to God in times of great distress.

What caused this pain in Hannah's heart? She had a husband who loved her, but she had no children and that broke her heart. To a Jewish woman being childless was a heavy burden to bear. But there was something else that contributed to her heartache: the other wife of her husband. This woman was mean. She intentionally said things to hurt Hannah because she could have no children (**I Samuel 1:6**). She "*provoked her sore*" or "*provoked her severely to make her miserable*" (NKJV). It was hard enough to endure being childless, but to have a spiteful person rubbing salt in her wound made Hannah's grief almost unbearable. Her situation reminds us of the words of the old hymn, "*Where could I go but to the Lord?*"

Samuel lived because of his mother's prayer. That prayer was said because of great stress. That stress was brought about by an affliction she did not choose and by a hateful woman who resented her for no reason. Yet a situation that began in tears ended in the life of a great and godly man!

Who else but God can bring good out of such tragedy?

Kerry Duke