



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

May 29, 2016

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**Elders:**

Dana Carter  
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

**Email:**

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Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

## “LET US PRAY!”

How many times have we heard this expression as a prelude to a collective journey of the brethren into the presence of God? I wonder, is it used so much that we forget its importance?

Here are some instances of corporate prayers found in the New Testament.

In **Matthew 26** and its parallel accounts we learn of Jesus apparently leading His disciples in prayer to bless the food (also, **I Corinthians 11:24**). This is our authority for the prayer we offer before the Lord’s Supper each Sunday.

On the occasion of Matthias’ selection to take Judas’ place with the disciples in **Acts 1**, we are told in verse 24, “*And they prayed.*” There is little doubt that one of the eleven led the prayer but the effect was the same as all praying.

After the apostles, Peter and John, were arrested and released for preaching the gospel, they came to the brethren. In **Acts 4:24** it is written, “*And when they heard this they lifted their voices to God with one accord...*” What a thrilling concept that all the brethren’s voices were heard by God as one! We are told God’s pleasure and power with this action were displayed when “*the place where they had gathered together was shaken*” (**verse 31**).

In **Acts 20** after Paul bade farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus, we are told that “*he knelt down and prayed with them all*” (**verse 36**).

In the New Testament we are given instruction about leading prayer. A good example of the general outline for a corporate prayer would be the model Jesus gave in **Matthew 6:9-13**, “*Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name...*” Here we see a prayer of praise, surrender, dependency upon God, mercy toward others and spiritual protection.

We are also told that when a prayer is led it must be discernible (**I Corinthians 14:15-19**) and should be led by a man when in a mixed gender assembly (**I Timothy 2:8**).

The next time you hear or say, “Let us pray,” try not to consider it as just an introduction of what is happening next but a spiritual call to join hearts and minds in the greatest privilege and power offered to mankind. See it as one person leading a group before the very throne of God.

**Floyd Kaiser**

# THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

**Galatians 5:22-23** says, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control: against such things there is no law.*” This well known passage commonly inspires us to set a goal of pursuing these individual qualities, and these are wonderful goals to have.

However, what many fail to realize is that these various qualities are not meant to be pursued individually. Instead, we should understand them as a whole. In the same way that fig trees produce figs rather than olives and a grapevine produces grapes rather than figs (**James 3:1-12**) the Spirit produces just one kind of fruit. The Spirit of God produces a godly spirit.

These qualities then are descriptors of that fruit. You might describe an apple as red, crisp, and sweet. Here, Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit as something that is beautiful, wonderful and desirable. These qualities, and others like them (*against such things there is no law*) are part of the Christian life. They describe the qualities of a life that has been transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A few verses earlier, Paul also describes “*the works of the flesh*” and says they are too self-evident: “*sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies.*” And like the fruit of the Spirit, this by no means is a complete list of descriptors of the work of the flesh for Paul says, “*and things like these.*” These qualities of the flesh describe a life that is corrupt with the spirit of the world.

In **verse 17**, Paul reminds us that these two very different types of fruit should not be growing in the same orchard. He says, “*For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other*” (see **James 3** again). This is the very struggle that the Apostle Paul himself was dealing with in **Romans 7**. In **verses 21-24** he says, “*So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*” Thankfully, his answer is our answer: “*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” As Paul said in **Galatians 5:16**, “*walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*”

**Joel Shelton**