

“Fellowship” - As the Word is Used in the New Testament

Twelve different times in the King James Version, the word "fellowship" is taken from the Greek "koinonia," which according to Thayer's Lexicon, means: "1. The share which one has in anything, participation" ...'fellowship of the Spirit' (Phil. 2:1). 'The fellowship of his sufferings' (Phil. 3:10). 'The fellowship of ministering to the saints' (2 Cor. 8:4). Luther Martin 'To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...' (Eph. 3:9). 'Ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord' (1 Cor. 1:9).

"2. Intercourse, fellowship, intimacy" 'they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship . . .' (Gal. 2:9). 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, ...' (Acts 2:42). 'For your fellowship in the gospel from the very first...' (Phil. 1:5). 'That ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3). 'if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another...' (1 John 1:7). See also 1 John 1:16.

By Luther W. Martin

"3. A benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution...."

See 2 Cor. 8:4 as referred to under No. 1 above. 2 Cor. 9:13 renders the word "liberal distribution." Heb. 13:16 uses the term "communicate."

The word "koinonia" is actually used some twenty times in the New Testament, but is translated "fellowship" only twelve times. In the other instances, it is translated "communion," four times; "communication," once; "contribution," once; "distribution," once; and by an inexact translation, according to Thayer, is rendered "to communicate," one time.

Thus "KOINONIA" refers to our relationship with God, with Christ, with the Holy Spirit, with one another ...but in each instance it is used in reference to the work and worship of the Lord. In no instance does the word refer to a gathering for entertainment or recreation.



The Auburn Beacon



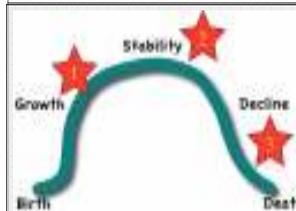
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Volume 6, Issue 37

July 19, 2015

The Lifecycle of a Church

By W. Frank Walton



Thoughts to Ponder

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."
(Revelation 2:4)

"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase" (Acts 9:31). Luke describes the church in Palestine (brethren in the aggregate) as experiencing dynamic growth. In general, they had their spiritual priorities in place, with a reverent attitude toward the Lord and reliance on the promises and guidance given by the Holy Spirit. God's people doing God's work in God's way will reap God's blessing. How many of us are bearing "much fruit" (John 15:5) to the Lord's honor and glory?

Maintaining the status quo becomes a rut. This church seeks to "hold its own." Members become weary of work and sacrifice. Religion becomes more of convenience instead of conviction. Is the church where you attend satisfied with the "status quo" and "holding your own.?"

Paul teaches that the ideal path of a church is ever onward and upward: "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). A vibrant lifecycle in the church comes from the renewal of firm commitment to the Lord and to the spiritual mission to which we have been called. The Lord's soul-saving work is the most important work in the world. It deserves and demands our best effort, both individually and collectively.

Those who study organizations of people have observed that most organizations go through 3 stages in its

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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Yolanda Stewart (Michael Bassie's Sister)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Toni Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Holly Law
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ellie Vaughn (Scott and Genna's baby)

July Birthdays

- 3-Nathan Rouse
- 6-Nathan Bradshaw
- 8-David DeFoor
- 11-Chase Winslett
- 11-Madi White
- 11-Hope Walker
- 11-Clay Morris
- 11-Kelsey Gallahar
- 11-Caroline Meadows
- 14-Laurel Jerkins
- 14-Megan Ryan
- 15-Bradley Seymore
- 15-Winston Atnip
- 18-Kerrie Hornback
- 19-Ben Holcomb
- 19-Jay Borden
- 21-Tori Luther
- 25-Betty Bradford
- 25-Yvette Rouse
- 26-Brandon Hester
- 28-Jacob Bradshaw
- 29-Hayden Phillips
- 30-Brittney Arnett

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mother, Nicole Pender!
- ☒ - Please keep the Tam's in your prayers as they are away in China.
- ☒ - Our Monthly singing will be tonight!
- ☒ - Please pray for the Bice family as Jana Hall and Justin Bice lost their uncle, Jeff Bice, this past week.
- ☒ - Please remember the Mauldin family as Owen passed away early Sat morning, the funeral in AL will be Wed in Hanceville.
- ☒ - There will be a gospel meeting at Prattmont with Harold Hancock this week, Sun - Fri!
- ☒ - Please keep Abbie Harrison in your prayers as she recovers from an extensive knee surgery.
- ☒ - Please pray for the Harold Carswell family as they are caring for his sister in their home.
- ☒ - The ladies class will be this Thursday. At 7 PM at the Joanetta Lauderdale's home on "heaven"
- ☒ - Please pray for Troy's father (Mac's grandfather) who is in the hospital in Prattville for a back issue.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Scott Perkins as he is recovering from Vasculitis.
- ☒ - All audio is immediately uploaded to www.auchurch.com.

Elders

Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

In a local church, as in our individual lives, we often pass through different stages in our spiritual development. The church at Thyatira was improving, though plagued with false teaching (Revelation 2:19). The church at Sardis was past its prime (Rev. 3:1-3). The church at Corinth has some good points and spiritual talent (1 Cor. 1:4-7, 11:2; 2 Cor. 8:7), yet they were plagued church problems due to carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-3) and a failure to follow through on their promises (2 Cor. 8:7,10-11; 9:2-5).

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life-cycle: (1) risk-taking stage, (2) caretaking stage, (3) undertaking stage. Let's see how this might apply to the life-cycle of a church.

1. Risk-Taking Stage. A new or small congregation often struggles. Yet, everyone must pull their own weight to not pull others down. Members are willing by faith to take risks to advance the cause of Christ, or as Jesus put it, to "launch out into the deep" (**Luke 5:4**). The adventure of faith means commitment to work hard and sacrifice to build up the local church in doing the Lord's work.

Such characterized the church at Philippi in zealously supporting gospel preaching (**Phil. 4:15-16**). The Lord's church in Rome was widely known for their active, aggressive and encouraging faith (**Romans 1:8,12**). The churches of Macedonia were materially poor but rich in dedication and sacrifice that even the apostle Paul marveled (**2 Cor. 8:1-5**).

In this stage of growth, members gladly volunteer their involvement. Members are active and aggressive in evangelism and inviting others to church, like the newly planted church at Thessalonica (**1 Thess. 1:8**). Launching out in this daring faith means a church has the willingness to face the possibility of failure, problems, rejection or difficulty in doing the Lord's work. The Thessalonian church had this bold devotion for Jesus, because of their idealist, vibrant spiritual traits: active faith, loving service, and steadfast hope in the Lord's second coming (**1 Thess. 1:3**). This is why the gospel grew and was glorified among them (**2 Thess. 3:1**).

2. Caretaking Stage. The church at Laodicea thought they had "arrived." They smugly thought that we "have need of nothing" (**Rev. 3:17**). Yet the Lord evaluated them accurately, "You are lukewarm" (**Rev. 3:16a**). His sobering warning of "repent!" (**Rev. 3:19**) or else would apply to all churches today who are smug and self-satisfied. Lukewarm churches that are content to putter along make the Lord sick!: "I will spit (or vomit) you out of my

mouth" (**Rev. 3:16b**). The caretaking church loses its vision of ever expanding growth, thereby missing its sense of mission and spiritual urgency.

After a church has grown, it is easy to drift into a "comfort zone." A nice building is built. They hire a good preacher who will do their work for them. There's usually enough members now that things that have to be done will eventually get done. Maintaining the status quo becomes a rut. This church seeks to "hold its own." Members become weary of work and sacrifice. Religion becomes more of convenience instead of conviction. Is the church where you attend satisfied with the "status quo" and "holding your own."?

3. Undertaker Stage. If a church remains in the caretaker stage long enough, it will soon be ready for the undertaker. The Lord said of Sardis, "You are dead" They were existing on their past reputation: "You have a name that you are alive" (**Rev. 3:1**). This rut has become "a grave with both ends knocked out." Someone at such a church may say, "The church here is at peace." This means someone needs to come preach their funeral so they can "rest in peace." There's not enough life to cause a stir about anything, either good nor bad. A church in the undertaker stage lives in the past. Or, they may think they're a good church because they have much potential that one of these days could be developed, if they really put their mind to it. Also, they think they are a sound church mainly because they have good intentions and theoretically stand for the truth on all the important issues.

As a member of a local church, how do YOU fit into that church's life-cycle? Make sure that you help the local church to renew itself by the Word of Christ in following Christ. Then by "speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him" (**Eph. 4:15**).



Sackcloth and Ashes

By Robert Turner

Did you ever wear a starchy feedsack shirt? (I mean a real one, not the store-bought kind you see now-a-days.) Scratchy, ain't they? Can't you just imagine one made out of towsack? (Grass-sack, for some of us.) Well, wearing sackcloth had a special meaning at one time.

King Ahab, stirred by Jezebel, was an evil man. But when Elijah told him the dogs would eat Jezebel, he "rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." And God said, "because he humbleth himself before me" judgment upon his house will be postponed. (**1 Kings 21:27-29**)

When Mordicai wished to mourn the plight of the Jews, he "put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a bitter cry." (**Esther 4:1-f.**)

Then, in Nineveh, when the people heard the prophet foretell their doom they "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth;" and Jesus said "they repented at the preaching of Jonas." (**Mt. 12:41**)

Humility (of self-censure), mourning, submissiveness, and the like are graphically represented in this early wearing of "sackcloth and ashes." It said clearly, "I am nothing--my former robes of purple (**Isa. 37:1**) were but tents of pride-- I need help." Little wonder such conduct was associated with repentance-- and Christ could say of Tyre and Sidon, "they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." (**Mt. 11:21**) Abject humility, while not "repentance," is certainly an essential ingredient. We wonder if the whole of "sackcloth and ashes" should not also be included?

Humility (of self-censure), mourning, submissiveness, and the like are graphically represented in this early wearing of "sackcloth and ashes." It said clearly, "I am nothing--my former robes of purple (**Isa. 37:1**) were but tents of pride-- I need help."

It is not the symbol itself to which we refer. We suspect many would wear the sack, who had not yet put on the things for which it stood. But when we see the casual way in which repentance is treated-- a sort of academic pause between faith and baptism-- there is little resemblance to the spirit of "sackcloth and ashes." The substance should far surpass the shadow-- must do so if it

is real. Do you see such "fruits meet for repentance" today? (**Note Mt. 4:8**)

Years ago a young lady came forward, wanting to be baptized. I said something about the jot she must feel in knowing that her sins could be washed away; and she looked at me in astonishment. "Sins??" She seemed shocked that I would suggest such a thing. That is "sackcloth and ashes"? A backsliding saint is encouraged to "make correction." His situation is an embarrassing one, and makes for a "sticky situation" among friends, so he "comes back to the church," or he "makes acknowledgment" to the church. This is "sackcloth and ashes" before the Lord?? Are we kidding ourselves?

Our inability to see and judge the heart of man should provoke charity; and I am aware that external signs and symbols may be most hypocritical. This article is completely misunderstood if you think I am calling for "demonstrations" of repentance. But I challenge you to consider the lesson contained in the ancient "sackcloth and ashes" and apply it to your life.

