

Atlanta Baptist Beacon

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Local Church Body, Why do we Need You?—Jim and Mariann Miller

Scenario- We had just moved to Atlanta and having been involved in Bible believing and preaching churches we knew we needed to find a biblical church to continue walking and serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We found Atlanta Baptist Church, and knew this was where we belonged.

Why is being a part of a local church important? The Bible teaches that our faith *should* be lived out within a body of believers. God established the church. Like a branch is nourished because it is connected to the tree so we thrive when we stay connected to a local church body that is rooted in Jesus.

We need Christ. We need each other. The Bible says, "He is the Vine. We (the church) are the branches." We are the body. He is the Head (Col 1:18). Here are 4 ways that we can grow when we are connected like a branch connected to the tree:

1) **PERSONAL GROWTH-** The Bible teaches that connection to other believers in Christ magnifies our spiritual growth. On our journey of personal and spiritual development, a dynamic church can deepen one's faith through discipleship, no matter how far we have already come. None of us are as strong alone

as we are together. (Ephesians 4:16)

2) **FRIENDSHIPS-** Making and having friends that share our same beliefs and values helps us navigate this crazy world! Belonging to a church body provides opportunities to support each other through Bible studies, special events, and social gatherings, creating a close camaradery. Christianity is not meant to be an independent journey nor should it have a "Lone Ranger" mentality, BUT together we can encourage each other to be the people God wants us to be.

3) **IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY/ OUR WORLD-** Most of us desire to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Our life becomes deeper and richer as we give our whole heart to Jesus and others. The mission of the church is to overflow God's love to people! By getting involved we fulfill God's call to love and serve others, creating a better world now and growing God's kingdom for eternity. (Mark 12:30-31; Mat. 28:18-20)

4) **ACCOUNTABILITY-** Through good Biblical teaching we are accountable to be faithful, and we are reminded of core beliefs. The world offers many

distractions and contradictions to God's word. Having a community of believers who know and live His truth helps reinforce our faith and holds us accountable to cling to these unchanging biblical principles.

It's sad to hear when people "give up" on church. Churches CAN-NOT be perfect places-- they are made of imperfect people! A church family is like a real family. Sometimes we do dumb stuff and hurt each other, but by the grace of God we can forgive and not let disappointments in people affect our faithfulness in serving others and our Lord. Finding a church to call home, and enjoying lifelong friends, is well worth the time and effort.

My challenge is for each reader to step up! Get involved if you have a church. If you aren't connected, find a church and watch your life be transformed by God.



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Note from the Editor:

In our last issue we inadvertently omitted a portion of the article titled *You Are Wonderfully Made* by Pastor Chance Glenn. This is the portion that was left out. We apologize for the error.

CHRISTIANS MUST DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF THE OPPRESSED, INCLUDING THE UNBORN

Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9)

We hope you are enjoying our Quarterly Newsletter. You can also find our Newsletter electronically on our New Website: www.atlantafbc.com

What is Your Marriage Centered On?—Richard Marsh

June is the time that many people are married. Sometimes it seems more attention is given to the wedding ceremony instead of the marriage. What does God have to say about marriage? Ephesians 5:31-33 “For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

One of the reasons God created marriage is to represent the close relationship between Christ and His church. Certain-

ly, love and respect are needed for a close relationship, but God intended love for Him to be above all else. In Matthew 22:33 Jesus said the first great commandment is “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Even though your spouse is a very close second, your love for God should be first. To quote evangelist Billy Graham, “For marriage to be right before God, the relationship must consist of three people: the husband, the wife and God at the center.” Since both spouses are called to love God, they should be working together to show that love. Not necessarily in the same function, but supporting each other in whatever God has

called each individual to do. An example of a couple working together in the New Testament is Aquilla and Pricilla which were always listed together. They were tentmakers who sponsored a church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19) and guided a new preacher in the Word. (Acts 18:16). It is important to note that they were recognized more for their mission for the Lord rather than their profession.

As you attend or hear about weddings in the next few months, take time to consider what your marriage is centered on. A marriage centered on God will bring glory to God and joy within your marriage.



The Gospel... Read It, Believe It, Live By It—Debbie Cain

Have you ever been asked how reading God’s word helped change you? That question brought about a time of reflection for me...reminded me of who I was, who I am now and how important God’s word is (Hebrews 4:12).

I recall when I first **really** sought God, and searched scripture for guidance – nearly 17 years ago. Four verses spoke to me so strongly, that after all these years, I still remember them: Deuteronomy 31:6, John 16:33, 1 Kings 17:12-16 and Philippians 4:19. I learned that I didn’t have to be

afraid, God was with me, I could have peace, and God would provide.

Reading the Bible and applying it to my life showed me that He and His word are trustworthy, and that is what began the change in me and my way of thinking.

Since then, I have learned that while God can help me out of difficult situations brought on by sin, He has better plans for me. Actually, He commands better from me (1 John 2:3-6). Because of His great love for me (1 John 3:1), He gave me His word and His Spirit, to show me the right

path (1 Timothy 3:16-17; John 14:26).

Each day I have a choice to make: I can serve and please man and my fleshly desires, or try to serve and please God, **but I cannot** do both (Romans 8:8; Matthew 6:24). As a Christian, this truth has changed everything about me.

There will be a day of judgement (Revelation 20:12-13), I will be held accountable (Revelation 22:12), and I don’t want to hear “Depart from me, I never knew you” (Matthew 7:21-23). Has God’s word helped change you?

Relationship—Nate Young

What is prayer? Prayer is a conversation with God. Why should we pray? When we pray to God we are building a relationship with Him. Prayer is also a privilege from God. This privilege is possible only because of what Jesus Christ did for each and every one of us. Christ died and took the wrath of the Father that was meant for us as sinners, Christ made it possible for us to have a relationship with Him.

One of the ways we are told to pray comes from Matthew 6:6. "But you, when you pray, go into

your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." We have to understand that fancy words or flashy lights are not what God wants from us when we pray. We are praying for Him and His glory, not ours. We have to be honest and sincere when we are praying because as it says in Matthew 6:8, "the Father knows what we need before you ask him."

As I come to a close, I would like

to pray for each one of you reading this,

"Dear Heavenly Father, I come to you saying thank you for all that you have done for this community. Your grace and mercy, that we don't deserve, is a true blessing to us all. Lord, if there is someone reading this that doesn't have a relationship with you; please open that door so we can help them start a relationship with you. I pray that you continue these blessings and we continue to build on our relationship with you. AMEN."



Scripture to Ponder...

As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; Luke 24:15 (NIV)

Why Small Groups?—Tina Young

What is small group and why do you attend a small group? These were my opening questions to an interview with Carol and Eugene Miller. I had questions all lined out to ask for an interview article about small groups. Instead their responses led me in a different direction.

I have always enjoyed visiting and being around Carol and Eugene. I think they are a couple with this immeasurable amount of faith. Visiting with them about small group, didn't disappoint.

When Atlanta Baptist decided to let the student ministry use the facilities on Sunday evenings the adults would have to worship in a different way. "Small Group? Well we haven't really done that before" Carol and Eugene said. They enjoy being in fellowship with other believers so much they decided they would give it a

try. They had no idea what was in store.

"Meeting in someone's home is more intimate and personal. We read scripture and discuss it, but it is more than that. We have this time of prayer that is just really hard to explain. The people in our small group are like our family. We share our concerns, fears, needs, and things we would not share with just anyone."

As the group sets around the large kitchen table in the home that hosts the small group, they discuss the mornings message and help each other with any questions. Eugene leads the Bible devotion and group discussion. The devotion is a passage of scripture from the Open Windows guide that our church provides for personal study growth. Once the discussion on the passage concludes they

take time to pray. The prayer is not led by Eugene or any one person in the group. They go around the table and take time to pray for one another, our church, community, and any other needs. Once they finish the prayer time, which will occasionally only takes a few minutes, but often takes quite some time, they will visit and enjoy a snack. There is no time limit on small group. When they are done, they are done.

If you have an opportunity to fellowship with a small group of believers or are invited to attend a small group with someone, you will not be disappointed. Carol and Eugene look forward to meeting with their small group each week and with the snow and ice this winter they had to sometimes miss. "It is something that we love and when we had to miss because of the snow or ice, the week just missed something" Eugene said.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 NIV

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Service Times

Sunday School: 9:30 am
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am
Youth Group: Sunday 7:00 pm
Small Group: Sunday 7:00 pm
AWANA: Wednesday 6:00 pm

**We're on the web:
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God's Sovereignty in the Hard Times—Cody Miller

Faith in God has helped me through many challenging times in my life. The sovereignty He has, and promises He makes, provide me with the strength and wisdom to work through trials. Sovereign means supreme in power or authority and God explains in Isaiah 46:9-10 that He is God, no one is like Him, His purpose will stand, and He will do all that he pleases. The reason this is important to me is because while God has all of the power He also promises that he will strengthen, help, and uphold me (Isaiah 41:10). I am told in Deuteronomy 31:6 that He will never leave me.

All of this sounds great and easy but I, like everyone else, have been through times when I question God. I stumble and

sin and don't measure up. I learned that it's ok to question because God can handle it when I'm upset or looking for answers. Because I am human and not sovereign I will never fully comprehend His power and full plan, but it's a good thing I'm not in charge! If we look to God for our answers by getting into the Bible and developing a relationship with Him, we will be redeemed and find peace and understanding.

My best will never be good enough, but because God sent His son to die on the cross and because of His perfect sovereignty, a sinner like me can spend eternity in heaven with Him. Through God and God alone I can go to heaven. It doesn't matter how good or bad you are; it comes down to

your faith in God, His sovereignty, and His promises. No matter what type of challenge I'm going through, it's not new for God or something He can't handle. God is perfect, he does not stumble; He does not sin. That is why I am comforted that He has complete power and sovereignty in the good and bad times.

***Be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid or terrified
because of them, for the
Lord your God goes with
you; he will never leave you
nor forsake you.
Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)***