

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

July 24, 2005

What Do We Do With Strangers in Our Midst?

Ralph Walker, Jr.

From our childhood we are told to be suspicious and cautious of strangers. People we don't know are kept at a distance until they can be judged safe or friendly. This article is not meant to negate that safe action. But...

The word for **hospitable** in the Bible comes from two root words - *philo*, meaning “love of,” and *xenia*, meaning “strangers.” One who is hospitable is one who loves strangers. Hospitality is found in six passages in the New Testament – twice regarding the qualities of an elder (**1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8**), once in reference to widows (**1 Tim. 5:10**), and three times in general (**1 Pet. 4:9; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2**).

“Strangers” to our assemblies are usually nervous and unsure of themselves. They aren't sure where they should sit (so they opt for the back rows, closest to the exit). They aren't sure what is going to take place and how they will participate. They don't know others. We've all been there at some time – alone, disoriented, anxious. It's not pleasant.

Here are some things we can do to really show we “love strangers,” and these things can be done by every Christian in the church.

1) Go meet them. You go to them. Don't stare, waiting for them to speak. Give them your name, and speak it clearly. Ask their name, then repeat it to make sure you have it. Finally use it in your next sentence so you'll remember it easier. Our names are important to us. Don't neglect it.

2) Orient them. Tell them where classes meet, where the restrooms are, and if they have small children, where the nursery is.

3) Don't leave them alone. Ask them to sit with you. If they refuse, that's fine, but at least you asked.

4) Smile - often. Show you love strangers.

5) Thank them for coming, when you meet them and when they leave. Invite them back, telling them the next time we meet. Someone told me of visiting somewhere once and he was told “Sit back, relax, you're among family.” I like that – a lot. Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone who visited us here could do that – sit back and relax because they felt they were among people who “love strangers”?

(Next week during our meeting we will have more “strangers” among us than usual. How will you act toward them? Remember that each one is a soul. Resolve now to be hospitable to them. – TN)

What Is It About Lighthouses?

Ralph Walker, Jr.

We're fascinated by them. They are on postcards, calendars, in coffee table books and websites. I've been in numerous homes where miniatures of them are collected. At least one preacher I know and his family use vacation time to visit them across the nation.

Lighthouses are beautiful, and majestic. But I think more, they are attractive to us because of their location on the shorelines of the earth and because of their function – saving lives and ships by warning them of treacherous waters.

Land's End catalogue had an article a few years ago about the Cape Spear Lighthouse in Newfoundland. It stands before icy waves that send spray 200 feet into the air. 60 mile an hour winds are considered "light." For over 150 years the Cantwell family has manned the lighthouse to guide ships through the dangerous waters. Hardships, isolation and cold make a hostile environment. Yet the Cantwells stay on. When asked what keeps them there, they said that each morning as the sun rises over the Atlantic, they rejoice that they are the first people in North America to greet the sunrise and welcome a new day.

John 17:15-18 depicts the people of God as warning lights in a world of darkness. We are the outpost of God's grace in a treacherous world. We were never meant to live isolated, sheltered, comfortable lives. We are meant to be shining beacons set on hills, lamps on stands and lights of the world. Our purpose is to warn the human ships plowing the seas of life that there is danger in sin.

In return, what do we get? The satisfaction of knowing we're serving a noble purpose. Others may be on this earth as obstacles, fluff, or window dressing. We are here to save souls. We get to demonstrate the "greater love" that Jesus spoke of in **John 15:13**. We are like our Master in that we get to sacrifice ourselves for others.

And like the Cantwells, we will be the first to see the coming Son. **I Thess. 4:16** promises that the dead in Christ shall rise first and ...thus we shall ever be with the Lord. At a funeral last Saturday, one of the funeral home directors was giving an explanation for our custom of burying people with their heads toward the west. He said it is so that at the resurrection, when bodies come out upright, they'll be facing the east, to greet the coming Sun/Son. While Jesus cannot come "from the East" when He returns (no matter where He comes there will be some to His west and some to His east), the sentiment is a hopeful one.

Be a lighthouse. Shine for Jesus. Warn the world of the ways of sin. That's our job.

"I, the LORD, am your God...; open your mouth wide and I will fill it."

– **Psalm 81:10**

Family News

Mary Burnett was in the hospital two weeks ago. She has been home for the last 1.5 weeks and is doing a little better. She returns to the doctor Thursday.

Neal Cobern had an infection in his leg, but is now well. However, he has been ordered to remain off from work for two to three weeks.

Nell Ferrell remains at NHC in room # 202. She has had several bad days this past week. Overall, she remains about the same.

Kathy Hollingsworth, Joyce Werner's niece (in her late 40's), had a stroke in June. She remains unable to talk well and mostly cannot move her right side. Recently she entered a rehabilitation center.

Sandra Hunt has high blood pressure, PMR and foot/ankle problems. She returns to the doctor on Thursday. She continues to take more blood pressure medicine (as instructed by the doctor), but so far this has been ineffective.

David, Karen and **Ben Hutson** are no longer members here.

Alvin "John" Jenkins, Robert's father, has lung cancer. He has been taking a once a day chemotherapy pill. This is a fairly new cancer treatment. It is not meant to be a cure, but so far things have gone well.

We are glad to welcome **Alexei Johnson!** He is the 14-year-old son of Bob and Terri (Congratulations!). His birthday is December the 29th.

Remember **Debbie Kelley** who remains at Brandywood in Gallatin. She is ready to leave Brandywood as soon as she finds a place to live.

Logan Owens' father passed away this past week. Logan has visited here several times and is only in his early twenties.

Remember **Dustin Simpson** who continues to serve in the Navy. He remains in training. Contact him at: 91 Quevic Drive Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Georgia Taylor is feeling a little stronger.

Joyce Werner is better. She was low on some B vitamins. At one point she received a shot for this and it helped a great amount. She will now be taking a supplement and this should help soon.

Robert Wray is about the same (he still has dizzy spells).

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Cobern** (here today, FL Tuesday on); **Fran Pickens** (FL for a while); **Lyda Plank** (OH); **Malones** (OK)

Lakeview church of Christ

132 New Shackle Island Road

P.O. Box 514

Hendersonville TN 37077

Building: 615-824-1376

www.BibleSaints.com

Bible Call: 615-824-1310

Troy Nicholson

trojenn@intergate.com

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).