

The Lakeview Lamp

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

September 30, 2007

Senior Citizenship

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Since there is only one way to escape old age, and that is to die young, most people expend every effort to try to live out many years of senior citizenship. In fact, some become obsessed with ambitions for longevity. We have all heard many say, “I won’t be satisfied unless I reach one hundred years.” Probably though, such ambitions are neither wise nor scriptural, and actually demonstrate too much love for this world and not enough interest in the eternity to come –where days, weeks, months and years will be unknown and un-numbered, where there will be no flesh and bones to deteriorate and where all the physical things that we associate with the passing of time will be non-existent.

The real disciple of Christ does not dread death, though he may certainly dread the ordeal of dying. Also, because of circumstances and obligations to others, he may not want to leave various loved ones without his help and presence. But if he has fought a good fight, and has kept the faith (see **2 Tim. 4:7**), he does not dread life after death, but joyously anticipates it. Paul exemplified such righteous desire for heaven but for the sake of others he gladly continued with them for their *“furtherance and joy of faith”* (**Phil. 1:21-26**).

Anticipating Retirement

A very large segment of American citizens are now retired, and another great segment of our people are actually counting the days and weeks and months until they reach retirement age. Indeed, many people desire retirement from secular occupations so that they may devote themselves more completely to spiritual objectives. I know several Christians who retired from their vocation and then devoted their whole time to preaching, teaching and to humanitarian work. Such people are to be highly commended for wisdom they have demonstrated. I do not think I have known such a person who was unhappy about the choice he had made.

Many other people seem to anticipate retirement only so it may enable them to rest. They think in terms of doing nothing at all, or if not that, of doing only that which gratifies their own physical desires. Such people move off to some remote sanctuary to “get away from it all.” Soon they begin to miss assemblies of the saints “because it is too far” (which they knew when they arranged the location). Others settle down to a life consisting of a minimum of activity – doing as little as possible – and are usually unhappy and soon unhealthy.

It seems strange to me that people would be careful to make it practical to attend services of a faithful church for several decades, and then at retirement make an arrangement that causes difficulty or even precludes such faithfulness. Instead of thinking of a nice, quiet place “away from it all,” why not be concerned for a place where one can readily be most useful to the cause of Christ and most actively engaged in work and worship with other faithful ones.

Challenging Opportunities

It has become quite usual for many preachers to retire to some locality where they can serve in a small church that really needs their services and their maturity. This is great. However, it would be equally great for many others to do the same – those who are not preachers. Instead of settling down in the midst of a big group of strong Christians who really do not need you and where your impact will be minimal, why not choose a place where the brethren are few, the cause weak and where your influence will be immeasurably great?

It is not my desire to discuss the many complexities of senior citizenship in the physical, economic, and social areas of life. In fact, for the purposes of this essay, I only desire to plead for faithfulness and fidelity in those sunset years. Jesus said, “*He that endureth to the end shall be saved*” (**Mt. 10:22**). There is no promise for those who served the Lord faithfully for forty or fifty years and then quit! Neither is there promise for those who lived in godliness for many years and then succumbed to corruption.

Finally, let us not become weary in well-doing. We must contend for the faith to the very end. Younger preachers sometimes accuse older ones of “mellowing” so much that they become “soft” doctrinally. Perhaps it is true that most older preachers do mellow somewhat. They do not manifest the same brashness and dogmatism of their youthful years. I do not lament this fact of life. However, it is pitiable when an old soldier of the cross puts down his sword and makes peace with the enemies of truth. And this sometimes happens to those who were not preachers also. Paul “the aged” was still enduring persecutions and was setting an example in steadfastness to the very end. Let us use our years of senior citizenship to produce the greatest possible impact upon the kingdom of Christ – for the strengthening of the weak, the encouragement of the strong, the saving of the lost and for our own eternal security.

“The LORD looked down from His sanctuary on high, from heaven He viewed the earth.” – Psalm 102:19

Family News

Julia and Jessie Edwards will be here Wednesday night.

Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101-A at NHC.

Nathan Fultz has multiple bone lesions on his leg and is scheduled for surgery – similar to what Sandlyn had – tomorrow morning at 10:30am.

Sandlyn Fultz is now able to walk without a walker! “Be sure to take a moment and Thank God for all of His rich blessings!” Read the latest on both at www.caringbridge.org/visit/nathanandsandlyn.

Sandra Hunt received flu and pneumonia shots last week and is waiting for test results to determine a date for her shoulder surgery.

Allen Malone is now home from Vietnam.

Laura Reed remains in room 103-B at NHC for therapy. Her blood pressure is slowly going down to where it needs to be.

Angela Steely has an oncologist appointment on Thursday.

Ame White has a doctor’s appointment on Wednesday. She requests prayers on behalf of the family and her.

Robert Wray is doing some better after falling two weekends ago and cracking his pelvis bone.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **David Bansemer** (OH).

New Reports from men we support: **Allen Malone** (Vietnam, now home).

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