

May 31, 2016

Monthly Support Report

Dear elders,

I pray that you are all well. We're fine. Personally I feel really good, my heart rate from my A-Fib seems to have been corrected back to a normal rhythm due to the success of my second ablation. I'm very thankful for that. Having a normal heart rhythm is enjoyable once again. And my health appears to be very good at this point in my life. I want to thank you for your prayers in my behalf. I was fortunate enough to have a cardiologist at the University who is considered one of the best in this part of his field. As a family our health is good, and we are very thankful for that.

I hope and pray that the church there is doing well. It's my prayer that you are being edified, and looking for ways to edify one another. And it's my prayer that each of you are firmly connected to the vine (Jesus Christ) and that you are feeding off of His word and growing so that you can produce fruit for God's glory.

I recently began a series of lessons on Sunday morning having to do with John 15 where Jesus says, "I am the vine and you are the branches." And as per usual, when you think you've mastered a familiar context such as this, when you go back through it and study it again, you find a few things you might have missed along the way while emphasizing something else. Here's one of the things that jumped out at me this time through John 15 in looking at bearing fruit for the Lord. It's found in verse 4. "remain in Me, as I in you, as the branch is not able to bear fruit of itself..." (YLT). It's a very simple verse, but it also strongly emphasizes the need of that strong and close association and connection with Jesus. Or we might say, feeding off of Jesus. Getting our strength from Jesus is just so very vital. And the two ways that we can do that is to feed off of His word (which is discussed in John 15), and the second way that comes to mind is for us to be actively involved in worship. And one part of our worship that quickly comes to mind is the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. For me personally, when I really focus my attention on that great sacrifice the Lord made for me, His death, burial, and resurrection from the grave and understand that through His sacrifice my sins can be forgiven, and that some day after my death that I will arise from the grave – never to die again, those thoughts really draw me closer to the Lord. I need to continually draw strength from my connection to the Lord. If I will do that, then things like spiritual growth, maturity and producing fruit will be a definite part of my life and who I am as a Christian.

The second series I'm working on that I began this past Sunday has to do with God's wisdom in drawing us together as a body of baptized believers in the church. Most of this series will address the many "one another" passages found in the New Testament. And in a day and age when we as Christians seem to assemble together and then go our separate ways throughout the rest of the week, it's my thought that we've lost sight of our need for "one another" when we leave the building after worship services are over. I understand that all of us are busy with work, and if we have children our children are involved in

more things (good things) than ever before that keep us as parents in the car taking them here and there for them to participate. And I like those things and I think they are in most instances very good for our children. But week after week goes by, and weeks turn into months and months turn into years and we find ourselves spending less and less time with each other outside of worship. My question is, "Can we fulfill those "one another" requirements and needs by simply going to a building 2-3-times each week? I don't think you need me to answer that question for you. You're very capable of answering it for yourself. The "one another" verses in the NT are important, and each of us needs to be paying more attention to them and the value they can bring to our lives. So, that's two series of lessons I'm working on and I'm enjoying my studies very much. Of course it's my hope that the congregation here will gain some spiritual strength and understanding from these lessons as well.

I've nothing new to report on the institutional church that has disbanded except to say we're trying to get more information about what has happened to all of the members that used to attend there. One family we found out has moved to Texas. That's a family of four. And they worship with us up until the very day that they moved. And I'm persuaded that through our discussions and studies that we have made an impact and a positive difference in the way that they understand certain subjects in the Scriptures. Three other members who were a part of that group have been worshipping us and we're attempting to be a good influence on them. Thus far they seem very receptive and our short discussions and Bible studies seem to be helping. Please keep this effort in your prayers. We have high hopes that more is yet to come from this door that has been opened for us by God. You'll recall that on many occasions I've mentioned in passing that as a congregation we have been praying for Open Doors. We're now seeing those many prayers being answered. Some doors of opportunity are opening up for us and we give God the praise, the honor and glory for those open doors. Now it's up to us to prayerfully take advantage of those open doors to the very best of our ability.

Finally, we recently had a visitor, a man who lives in the area of the church building. He's a very nice man who seems to have a genuine interest in learning the truth. I have approached him about having a Bible study and he has agreed. So I'm very thankful for the opportunity and I'm very anxious to get started. Please pray for me in this effort. Please pray that he will have a good and honest heart that's receptive to the truth.

Thank you so very much for your fellowship in the gospel. I greatly appreciate it and I continue to remember all of you in my prayers. You truly continue to be a blessing to me and to my family. And thank you as members of the congregation there for your cards, letters and emails of encouragement. With God's help we will continue to do what we can to help bring glory to God.

God bless.

Randy