

## Monthly Support Report

February 28, 2018

Dear elders,

Greetings on this the last day of February. It's my prayer that things are going well for all of you. We are doing fine and things are going well for us as we enter into March. I know that February is a short month, but it does seem as though it has passed by quickly. Maybe it's because Spring is in now in sight, although I know it's not good for me to get my hopes up because March weather can be tricky. However just knowing that March is here helps.

I guess the past week or so here is no different than it has been there for all of you with what's been going on in the world. Current events have kind of dominated many of our personal conversations and have found their way into some of our Bible Class discussions. And while school shootings are nothing new in our culture, when they do happen and when that many children are killed, it certainly catches the attention of our families. And most of our families still have children in school whether its elementary, high school or in college. And we also have some teachers who have to deal with it at a different level. It's unfortunate, but it's the world we live in today. While I still have a high school student in the school system, and I share the same concern of other parents, it's of interest to me to hear from teachers and administrators about how they approach situations such as this.

From a Biblical perspective we know that there's a difference between worry (anxiety) and concern. So we're instructed by inspired Scripture to not be anxious over things and to place our cares and concerns into the capable hands of the Lord. But, there's always that interesting discussion about the difference between being anxious over something and being concerned. That always makes for a good Bible discussion and for a healthy look at the definition of words. I enjoy studies and discussions such as that where Christians are so curious and interested in all that the Bible has to say on a particular subject such as this. If you'll stop and think about this for a moment, without being exact, and putting them in any kind of order, two rules for Bible Study would involve what I've just stated. 1. Define words (know what words mean and how they are used in the Bible). Sometimes English Dictionaries can be misleading. 2. Gather all that the Bible says on a particular subject before drawing your conclusion. Oh, and what did we conclude? Let me give you the two passages that the class kept coming back to. There were many others, but these two were two that kept coming up time and time again. 1 Peter 5:6, 7, <sup>6</sup>“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” The second one I'll not quote for you simply because it's too long. It's Psalm 46. But it too should be somewhat obvious although you can probably think of other NT passages. If you've discussed this current event and would like to share some of your discussion and or passages that have brought you comfort feel free to share those thoughts and passages. I'll be more than happy to pass your thoughts along. Sharing with other brothers and sisters in Christ as you know is one of the many wonderful blessings of

the family of God. As some of you know, we've shared some things before and it's been both helpful and encouraging.

I'm very blessed to have a couple of Bible studies taking place. You know me well enough by now to know that I enjoy Bible studies simply because I have the opportunity to share God's word. Planting the seed is a privilege as you watch it begin to sprout and take root in someone who has never been taught the truth before. But one study is with a brother who is having some personal struggles. So, it amounts to more than just a regular Bible study. It's a time of encouragement, admonishment, and prayer as well. It's so very unfortunate when Satan rears his head and gets a foothold in a certain area of a Christians life. But as I'm sure you know, it does happen when the flesh becomes weak. It's times like this that I'm reminded of the apostle Peter and his boast to the Lord that he would die before he would deny the Lord. I'm convinced Peter thought denying the Lord would be the last thing he would ever do. But what Jesus told Peter on that occasion is something that I'm reminded of as I study with this brother. The spirit may be willing but the flesh can be weak when it comes to certain things we're faced with. We've talked about this passage in Matthew and together we've wondered about those occasions when life may have distracted Christians from prayer, Bible study or worship and Satan took advantage of those times. We've used this discussion to try and help with the situation he's in as a motivation to become more involved in the things of God. It helps, and the situation is improving. But we're just not where we need to be just yet.

The other study has been with a new convert. As you likely know a study with a new convert is a very rewarding study that doesn't have a timetable. It's one of those studies that I just want to take my time and make sure that God's word is being absorbed and understood to the best of their ability. I've come to realize over the years that as time goes on and they mature in the word, their understanding will also grow. It helps me to think of myself and my own understanding of many different Bible passages and how different my understanding is today than it was five or ten years ago. And I likely thought I really understood those passages really well 10-years ago. And it's not that my understanding then was bad, it's just that it's better today because I've continued to study and grow. So, this is their beginning, and as I plant, someone else will help with the process as time goes on as someone helped me. It's a blessing to be a part of that growth process.

I was just thinking the other day how blessed we are as a congregation to have such wonderful young people. That's not only a credit to their parents, that's also a credit to them personally. They've stayed away from the many bad influences of this world. They help out in teaching Bible classes. The young men wait on the Lord's table, lead singing, make announcements, do the scripture reading. They basically do anything and everything they're asked to do. With all of the negative that's going on in the world associated with young people, it makes you so thankful to be surrounded with such outstanding young people. But I'm certain that I'm not telling you anything that you can't relate to, because you're also surrounded by young people just like the one's I'm describing.

We're still sending out our Daily Bible Reading. Along with this we're brainstorming and trying to come up with ways to encourage our friends and neighbors to take part. We already have some

of our friends and neighbors involved. But some dropped out when went to the Old Testament. We've talked about a solution, but thus far we haven't come up with one. We'll keep working on this and hopefully we'll come up with a solution soon.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your fellowship in the gospel. It's a blessing to be able to be able to teach and preach in this area and to do the work of the Lord. And your help is so vital in doing this work. Thank you.

God bless.

Randy