

A Verse to Live by

“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

Romans 14:19 (NIV)

June Prayer Focus

We desperately need unity in the church, not just at 11th Street but nationally. Please pray that we as Christians can pull together and support each other. Satan has used these same issues for 1000s of years to cause problems in this world. Let's pray the verses in Romans 15:5-7 will characterize today's churches: "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Life Application Challenge

We each know someone that rubs us the wrong way. Someone we really just do not like. They may offend us, annoy us, or just their very presence irritates us. Maybe we have resentment toward someone. I challenge each of

us to lift that person up in prayer every day this month. We may never be friends with that person but we can love them anyway. James 5:16 "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." We may be the only person praying for that individual. As we pray God also works on our hearts removing the hard parts. We all need that.

Recommended Scripture Reading

2 Corinthians 13 This chapter is a good reminder to live righteously and in harmony with each other.

1 John 4 In this chapter we are instructed to be careful what and who we choose to believe. There are so many theories and philosophies right now we need to be vigilant about what we accept as truth. We are also reminded how important it is to show love.



Church On Fire!

Eleventh Street Church of God | June 2020 Prayer Newsletter

Each month of 2020 seems to bring another big challenge to our nation and the world. Pandemics, wars and rumors of wars, violence in the streets, loss of innocent lives, and suicide attempts are on the rise. Add to that, we are not gathering together to be able to encourage, hug and pray with each other... to say this is a rough time is an understatement. People are angry, hurting, lonely, fearful and arguing with each other. Friendships are ending due to disagreements about how we handle this pandemic, racial issues, and political views. We may be asking ourselves "is this the end of the world?", and some hope it is. No one has that answer. Only God knows: "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32) So we need to continue living and working to glorify God and leave a legacy for future generations. Now more than ever we need to, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thes. 5:16-18) No matter how bad the situation, something happens in our minds and hearts when we rejoice in God. All that energy we were giving to worry, fear and hopelessness gets redirected toward God, and worship replaces worry, faith replaces fear, and hope fills our hearts.

The current issues we are facing right now are divisive; dividing families, churches and ending relationships. We definitely don't have the answers to all these issues, but we know someone who does: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is.9:6) He is the answer to all this division. He gives counsel to those seeking, He is Mighty in battle, He is a Father to the fatherless, He can bring peace to any heart and relationship if invited in. We have His Word and it explains the way to peace, unity and joy. But we have to do our part by asking, seeking and knocking. Then we will receive, we will find, and the door will be opened. (Matt. 7:12) God is love (1Jn. 4:8), He is a good God, He answers prayers! His answers are not always what we want, but are ALWAYS what we need. We can boldly go before the throne of God to pray and ask Him to bring peace and unity in our home, church, community, nation and world. No problem is too big for God, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26) There will always be troubles, we know this. We also know with God are all things possible, that Jesus has overcome the world (Jn. 16:33), and all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28) If you are a child of God, you are called according to His purpose and part of that purpose is to love God and others. (Matt. 22:37-39)

It is so important for the church to be a family of peace and unity right now. How do we do that? Every member of our church has their own opinions, biases, and predispositions about what is happening. Paul instructed the church in Corinth to be unified, "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Cor. 1:10) That seems QUITE impossible in today's social climate. Yet, we are told "with

God all things are possible." Only with God is this type of unity possible. We as a church must agree on the foundational truths of Christianity. In Ephesians 4:4-7 Paul writes "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." From there we need to be patient and gentle with each other, tolerating each other in our weakness and respectfully instructing those less mature in their faith than us. It is easy to judge each other, but it is so destructive. We see this happening online regularly. One person disagrees with another and the criticisms start being typed out faster than we can read them. Words like stupid, hater, loser, racist or worse names are thrown around. I have yet to hear someone testify they were led to Christ by someone slandering and judging them. This world is a mean place. Our church better be a safe one then, because the lost are dying without Jesus right now as you read this and we all need the Lord. If we cannot come together with love and respect for each other then people seeking will pass us up. They will find something or somewhere to feed that seemingly innate desire for a "higher power" we all have in us. We are now seeing first hand the result of godlessness in the hearts of men and women. It isn't pretty. We must be a loving, safe space for those seeking peace, love and understanding. The only way they will see this is if we live and show each other love: "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (Col. 3:14) In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 we are instructed on exactly how to show love toward each other. If we do not show love each of us individually will have to answer for that one day. We may have many excuses to not show this kind of love to others but we have no valid reasons. "We love because he first loved us." (1 Jn. 4:19) Not only is it the only way a church will thrive and grow, it is a sign we truly love God. "If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother." (1 Jn. 4:20-21)

If we want to be a church on fire, a church where love, peace and joy are shown - it starts in our own hearts. First by asking Jesus in our hearts and professing He is Lord. As we study the Word we mature in our faith with the guidance of His Spirit, and as a result we learn to love righteously. Then we share that with our families, and our families come and share that with the church, and then our church shares that to our community. Since we are the body of Christ - we must regularly check ourselves and make sure we are doing what He would do. Are we truly living a life that represents Christ's love? In 2 Corinthians 13:5 we are told to "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" May we all pass this test!

Watching God Work,

Carolyn Abel