

From the Community Co-Spiritual Director

"...just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Galatians 3:6

American citizens all know that April 15 is designated as the "due" date to have our tax accounts completed and filed. The IRS takes a dim view of those who don't pay what they owe, and they come looking for you. There are very few excuses that are accepted. The IRS expects obedience to the law, even when we don't agree or understand.

I believe that God looks at us the same way when we try to enter His presence without faith and obedience. The church hymn says, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." Yet many Christians may attempt to enter the holy place by their own way, by works. Some think that, "If I do the right things, God will take me into His Kingdom." That's followed by, "If I pray the right prayer, attend the right church, help the right person or cause, or give a certain amount of money then God will accept me."

What God wants from us is to trust Him exclusively, in all situations, no matter the consequences. God tells us to love one another, yet we hurt others. God tells us to forgive others, yet many hold grudges and seek revenge. Where is the trust and obedience? Do we really trust His Word, even when we don't understand it?

I pray our accounting day will be a pleasant one, with all our "ducks in a row." We all responded to, "Christ is counting on you," with "And I am counting on Christ." Let's show our faith and make God happy by our obedience.



In the love of Jesus,
Pastor Ray Harper
Community Co-Spiritual Director



Please pray for the residents who attended the Kairos weekends listed below, Our prayers will help them get closer to God.

"I was in prison and you visited me..." (Matt 25:36)

Lebanon Correctional Inst #48 - March 13-16

North Central Correctional Inst #12 - March 20-23

Trumbull Correctional Inst #25 - March 20-23

Northeast Pre-Release Center #5 - March 27-30

Toledo Correctional Inst #22 - March 27- 30

Lucasville #18 - April 3-6

Words from Our Community Lay Director



I have just arrived home from a road trip to Marietta Ohio, where I attended the Emmaus Leadership Development Event. It is always a blessing to spend a day with other brothers and sisters in Christ. It is also a blessing to be reminded of the scriptures that guided the development of the Emmaus walk years ago. The mission of Emmaus is to empower leaders to be the hands and feet of Christ. One of the things we do as the hands and feet of Christ is serve one another. In John 13:12-17, we are reminded of how Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. Jesus taught them with His example how we are to serve one another: by assuming a lowly position in humility, and do a menial task, out of love. John 13:17 says "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Being blessed is more than just being happy. According to my concordance, there are over 75 scriptures that talk about being blessed, many of which are in the book of Psalms, and Proverbs. The most familiar are the Beatitudes from the book of Matthew of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Interestingly, there are only 20 scriptures that talk of being happy and none of those came from the mouth of Jesus. Here are just a few scriptures that speak to being blessed:

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. (Ps 112:1)

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. (Matt 5:9)

A generous man will himself be blessed. (Pr 22:9)

A faithful man will be richly blessed (Pr 28:20)

Blessed is the man who perseveres. (James 1:12)

It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

As we pursue happiness in our lives, let us remember that what we should really be seeking, are the blessings that comes from our relationship with the Lord – Not so much the material things that we often think will make us happy. For Matthew 6:33 says "Seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Peace,

Sue Neves

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THANK YOU, COMMUNITY - We wish to express our deepest gratitude to all of you who give up so much of your free time to serve the Pilgrims for the Lord before and during each Walk. God has blessed your efforts to create an environment that welcomes the Holy Spirit.

We are a Community that **CHRIST CAN COUNT ON!**

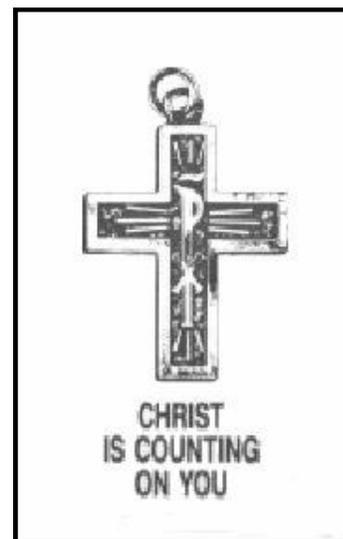
Share Groups – Why are they needed? – To stay closely in touch with Christ!

A group of Christians in fellowship is not an Emmaus invention. The scriptures report many stories of fellowship. The New Testament recognizes a special fellowship among those who share a common knowledge of Christ and those who want to grow in that knowledge by sharing with others in a life of grace. Acts 1:42 says, *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers."* That's what we did on our Emmaus weekends and it's what we need to continue to do in order to grow spiritually and maintain that feeling of well-being.

Regular participation in a Share Group can be a renewal of your Emmaus weekend experience. Share Groups hold us accountable for spiritual growth and Christian action. As we learn to trust our brothers/sisters in our Share Groups we are confident that we can reveal our deepest fears and feelings to them knowing they will share it only with God in prayer.

A Share Group is a comfortable group with whom to share our "closest to Christ" experiences. "Closest to Christ" is when the focus of the moment was on Christ, a time in which we experienced something which was Christ-like. For instance, we saw the image of Christ in the actions of another person or we witnessed a situation in which we can say, "This represents Christ's activity in the world." A "close moment to Christ" keeps us in conscious touch with Christ and builds us up in Him. We are able to do this by dying to self and by being able to see Christ working in the lives of those around us. It's a memorable experience to share with our Share Groups as it gives us an opportunity to grow bolder in our witness.

As Christians we always find ourselves in a three dimensional relationship—three sided, with God, with others, and with ourselves. In Romans 12: 1-2, Paul calls us to *"offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to Him;"* Ephesians 4: 2-3 *"Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together."*



Good Stuff from Our Kitchen Coordinator



Hope you are as excited as I am that we will be having a June Women's walk. Keep sending in applications so we can have a "full house".

Keep in mind to sign up for Thursdays too on the sign-up sheet. Sunday mornings are in need for a couple of sign-ins too.

Look ahead on your calendars and set some times to join us in the kitchen and remember to bring something to share for the Gathering on the 13th of April. It's fun to share and get to know and encourage others at the Gatherings. Let's keep the Spirit going strong.

In Christ's service,
Jean Grumbling

Are You a Sponsor?*

It is always exciting when a friend or relative agrees to fill out the application for the Emmaus week-end. It is even more exciting when they get the call that they have been given a spot on a week-end walk and can now be called a pilgrim! Usually, at that time, we believe that our jobs as a sponsor begins. We begin to gather the necessary agape letters and we tell our Emmaus friends to join us at the Saturday candlelight or Sunday closing to support that pilgrim. We may offer to take care of children, run errands or even arrange to pay some, or all, of the remaining registration fee. All of these things are definitely actions of a good sponsor. But there is so much more. Becoming a sponsor for an Emmaus Pilgrim begins far before you get the application for the walk.

Your role as a sponsor begins the moment you realize that your friend or relative may be ready and receptive to the information you can share about Emmaus. You become a sponsor when you begin to share how wonderful it is to learn how to have a strong, loving, and stable relationship with Christ. You begin that journey with your "pilgrim" as you begin to explain how wonderful your life has been since your Emmaus walk; and how exciting it has been to know, really know that God loves you – unconditionally. As you know, not all people are immediately receptive to the information you are so eager to share, but that's ok. God knows the right time for each person to have the Emmaus experience and He knows that you are now in place to help that person along the way. You will pray for and with that person daily until he / or she is ready for a place on a walk. You will continue to support that person with information, ideas, and lots of love and faith to know that God is patiently waiting for him / her to become a pilgrim. But wait, there's more . . .!

Flash forward. Your friend or relative has now begun the "Fourth Days". Your role as a sponsor has just become even more important. We often forget that each of us experiences the initial "Fourth Days" differently. Some of us soar with the eagles, but then some of us are extremely confused and scared. As a sponsor, we must be attuned to our pilgrim's needs and provide that person with the love and support needed to truly know how God loves them. We must keep in touch with our pilgrims and ask them how things are going, help them get into a share group and invite them to attend gatherings with you. Stay in touch, spiritually, with that person. Pray with them, pray for them – often. Remind them how important they are to you and to God. Finally, encourage that person to pay it forward. Explain to your pilgrim how special it is to be a sponsor and encourage the process to move forward with someone they love. Be a sponsor is showing how much God's light shines in you.



DeColores.
Nita Jenkins

*Reprinted from the February 2012 Emmaus Newsletter

PRAY-PRAY-PRAY

...for the team and Pilgrims of Women's Walk #70, June 19-22, 2014..