

# Attend Church Regularly

...and read your Bible daily

## WEEKLY SERMONETTE

From Norton Christian Church

"We've got to really challenge our youth and do what needs to be done to keep them interested in church, because after all, our youth are the church of tomorrow!"

I've heard this statement a jillion times over the years; I winced every single time. While this well-intentioned thought sounds great on the surface, it contains some very horrible underlying messages that Satan often twists for his advantage in the heads and hearts of our young people. For example:

"If we're the church of tomorrow, then we can wait till 'tomorrow' to really get serious about serving the Lord."

"If we're the church of tomorrow, no one is really counting on us taking a leadership role for a long time."

"If we're the church of tomorrow, then I can 'sow my wild oats' today and then be a dynamic leader in the future."

One of the reasons so many Christian young people have their spiritual lives crater in college or young adulthood is because they've bought Satan's lies about delaying their spiritual passion, service, and leadership because they are, after all, only "the church of tomorrow."

Let's face the real truth. Many young adults who put off getting serious about the Lord's work because they are young never get serious about the Lord. Many who have great potential for spiritual leadership never see that potential realized because the opportune moments in their youth to use their gifts are gone, never to come again. Many who sow wild oats harvest their horrible fruit and lose their spiritual passion or have their spiritual lives greatly damaged because of unnecessary sin and its consequences. (PLEASE don't hear this to mean that those who've blown can't come back and live powerfully productive spiritual lives: they can. But, there can be many unnecessary wasted years and opportunities as well as many unnecessary wounds and regrets as a result.)

Paul used young Christians as genuine leaders. In Acts 16 Paul begins goes to Lystra and chooses Timothy to accom-

pany him on his mission trip. Timothy is a very young man who is highly respected by all in the Christian community. In other words, he had already displayed his Christian maturity and character at a young age and the church recognized it. Timothy had seen Paul persecuted and left for dead on his first visit to Lystra. Yet when Paul asked Timothy to work with him, Timothy courageously accompanied him. Paul used Timothy to go back and strengthen churches and encourage new Christians as a very young man. Several conservative scholars believe Timothy was around 19 at the time of his work in Thessalonica!

So what's the point?

First, our young people are the church of today. We cannot afford to let them wait until they are older to make important contributions to the life of the Church. Their ministry is essential. The things they can do, the places they can go, and the people they can impact in their teens and twenties are incredible. Their ministry builds the church, reaches the lost, and grows them into powerful leaders at a much younger age. We need them now just like the early church needed them!

Second, we shouldn't call our teens and young adult Christians to boring and safe church work, but to hard and faith-stretching service. The young will not be satisfied with uninspiring and boring "status quo keeping" roles. Let's challenge them with meaningful ministry opportunities like Paul did Timothy!

Third, let's realize that in the early church, not only were the older Christians challenged to be an example and model for young Christians, but young Christians were also challenged to be an example to older Christians in their "faith, their life, their love and their purity." 1st Timothy 4:12.

We're in the long season of graduation ceremonies for many different ages. Let's commit that this also be a graduation time for our congregations and our parents. Let's graduate out of the flawed mentality that the youth are the church of the future, but instead, live passionately with the conviction that the youth must be a vital part of our churches and our ministries today!



## THE FEET OF THE MASTER

"Oh, no! I can't see those feet. Am I an orphan in this strange 'people-world'? Where are those feet? My mama warned me to pay attention. I hope the feet find me."

Even though this little ball of fur is so tiny, she is most familiar with her master's feet. Yet, when she is most lonely, she cries for him and he lifts her up and she looks into loving eyes that smile at her warmly. Though once again placed upon the ground, the warmth remains.

Each day, one might say that we, too, sit at the feet of our Master. As we travel from task to task each day, we may lose track of the Master. Yet God watches over us, and when we cry to Him we are lifted up and we feel the warmth and the love that can only come from our Heavenly Father.

Do you need to experience God's loving care? Visit your chosen place of worship this week. Worship at the feet of the Master. He will lift you up.

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## PITCH TOURNAMENT

By JAKE DURHAM

It was a magnificent starlit night as the faithful gathered for the April pitch tournament and even though it was several days past the annual April Fools Day, there were several who entered the room shouting, "It's raining outside." To add to the frivolity, some even ran out to see. The Ladies Quartet was singing "April Showers Bring May Flowers," while the Grandmothers were handing out Daffodils. The Hat Man and The Auctioneer signed in on lucky No. seven and the Muddy River Boys boldly took No. 13. Lady A took her usual No. eight and The Double K team took No. 14, after that some were flipping coins to decide if they wanted odd or even as they signed in on the board. The Golden Girls were noticed to be wearing Buckeyes on leather thongs around their necks, and it wasn't for sure if they were for good luck or for arthritis. The clock on the wall indicated it was about time to start but there was one team short when a pair entered through the south door claiming to be gold miners and were looking for the Prairie Dog Vein. They were immediately given the last even number and the Brown Eyed Girl shouted, "Begin to Commence" as 52 rushed to the tables.

The desire for an early lead was obvious as the first round bidding came on strong and as the first round came to a close, the Redneck and the Black Hat Kid, seasoned players of the game, took the first round honors and declared it would be, "ten in a row". Undaunted by such wild declarations, Team Double Z took the second round honors but the Redneck and Partner were playing hardball and maintained the lead. To prove their point, the Redneck and the Kid made it a double as they took the honors on round three to increase their lead by a ten point margin. The gong sounded for the first break and most gathered around the tote board for a quick look. The Hat Man and the Quiet One were in second place followed by The Magician and Sword Swallower in third, and there was a three way tie for fourth with Doctor Bones and the Oil Baron, the Bomber Pilot and the Cattle King, and Shock Man and the Coach.

The bell sounded to start round four and non-too-soon as everyone was anxious to resume play. There were some obvious attempts to make up for some short scores as the bidding continued to be strong. The Dancing Girls and the Now Generation Girls had a tie for the honors on round four and the skins game favored the Now Generation for the honors, the Red Neck and the Black Hat Kid, with a smile and a tip of the hat reminded everyone who was still in the lead. Bug Man and the Exterminator grabbed the honors on round five and for the first time since round one the lead changed as the Muddy River Boys now shared the lead with the Bomber Pilot and the Cattle Baron. The Bug Man and the Exterminator were making a run for it as they made it back to back as they also took the honors on round six and as the gong sounded for the second break, everyone took a hard look at the board to assess the situation. Things were beginning to get complex as Bug Man and the Exterminator were now sharing the lead with the Muddy River Boys. The Farmer and the Secretary were in third, the Bomber Pilot and the Cattle King were now in fourth, and CK and Doctor Bones were in fifth. From there on down it was too close to sort.

Skull sessions were the order of the day as the second break got underway as the crucial seventh and eighth rounds were coming up and those low on the board knew they had to make some bold changes while those near the top could not afford to take risks and drop out of contention. The seventh round started on a more serious note as the bidding was now more deliberate and as the round continued some sounds of agony could be heard from the back of the room. The Red Neck and the Black Hat Kid took the honors again but

it was the Farmer and the Secretary who had been playing hands all along, squeezed the Muddy River Boys out of the top spot by one point. The Turkey Farmer and the Greens Keeper took the honors on round eight as they squeezed out the Coyote Callers and Bug Man and the Exterminator but it was the Bug Man and the Exterminator who moved into the lead once again. The ninth round was now coming up and you could sense the stress as the round was played out and as the gong sounded to announce a catch up break, everyone stayed around the tote board to determine just how to play the final round. The Golden Girls and the Red Neck and the Black Hat Kid had tied for the honors but the skins rule went in favor of the Golden Girls on the next round. The Muddy River Boys had moved once again to the top of the board but were now in a tie for the lead with the Farmer and the Secretary in first place. Bug Man and the Exterminator were in third, The Redneck and the Black Hat Kid were in fourth and rounding out the top five was the Bomber Pilot and the Cattle Baron. The next five places were almost on top of each other and it was obvious once again that the tenth and final round would determine the outcome.

There were some who were noticed taking deep breathing exercises and as the final round began, there were some good luck charms now on the tables (never too late). For those near the top, the final round seems to never end and for those needing to catch up, it ends all too fast but all good things come to an end and as the tallies were recorded, the lead seemed to change with each new posting, there was a four-way tie for the honors between the Coyote Callers, the Muddy Bottom Boys, the Farmer and His Secretary and the Big Mac Attack. The Muddy Bottom Boys won on a high card draw, but it was the Farmer and His Secretary who stole the show as they took the top spot on the score board for the championship.

It had been a highly contested championship and it was a grand finale. The champions had been there and done that before and they took their accolades with humility and dignity and vowed to return to defend their newly won title. Top ten teams in order were: 1. Dee and Thelma Bushnell; 2. Todd and Doyle Brooks; 3. Jerry Darling and Lynn Thiele; 4. Dick Hemphill and Carl Neff; 5. Coy Christy and John Hildebrand; 6. Joyce Sumner and Eleanor Jensen; 7. Dave Shely and Jack Mechsner; 8. Ed and Kathleen Berlier; 9. Tony Hildebrand and Larry Harmon; 10. Dennis McMullen and Duane McEwen. Winning score by Bushnell and Bushnell was 130 points for an average of 13 points per round.

High round scorers were: Tony Hildebrand and Larry Harmon; Arnold and Dorothy Zillinger; Kim Gallentine and Stacy Breiner; Jerry Darling and Lynn Thiele; Bill Glennemeier and Eldon Vincent; Joyce Sumner and Eleanor Jensen; Coy Christy and John Hildebrand. Highest single round score was 23 points by Tony Hildebrand and Larry Harmon. Triple high round scorers were Hildebrand and Harmon; double high round scorers were Jerry Darling and Lynn Thiele.

Other teams not previously mentioned were: Julia Roeder and Vicky Henderson; June Jolly and Margaret Magers; Alice Chance and Jeanette Groothoff; Kathryn Van Meter and Junita Eckhart; Barbara McKie and Donna Millan; Ron and Sondra Kester; Paul Schultz and Lothar Fuerstenau; Cynthia and Ed Glennemeier; Doc Peterson and Carl Neff; Mary Jane Wahlmeier and Jackie Porter; Dewaine Stapp and Leone Purton; Barry Madden and Bill Johnson.

Some Willie Nelson tunes were being played as past hands were replayed and post-mortems were discussed. Everyone seemed to agree it wasn't over until it was over.