



Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

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Interim Pastor: Rick Pinilla January 2018 Volume 35, No. 1

"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."

Upcoming Events:

*Men's Breakfast:
Saturday,
January 13 at
7:30am*

*Women 2
Women:
Thursday,
January 18 at
6:30pm*

*Annual Business
Meeting:
Sunday, January
28 at 11:30am*

A Word from our Interim Pastor

I remember when I bought my first computer. I had techie friends who sang the praises of the machines and talked about how much easier everything was going to be. Then the internet was supposed to accelerate the convenience and efficiency. It certainly is true that a lot of things are easier and more efficient, but the result has most certainly not been easier lives with less work and more leisure. Expectations have risen along with technology. So now it must be here yesterday and it must be perfect. You old fogies like me remember ignoring typos. We also have more contacts with people who can get access to us now and increase the demands of our jobs and the number of people we don't know personally but must please in some way. I don't see any going back and I'm not whining. I just want to acknowledge that life and work have more demands now than ever; and that the new normal is to be spent after work and struggling to keep up at home on the weekends.

In this kind of world, it is easy to slack off on things that seem like extras or add-ons. So, I understand Christians giving regular personal time with God a miss. They want to read and pray; but who has the time?

I think this is a false savings. According to the Bible, if you give up private devotional time with God you will have less time not more. Don't believe me? Consider the two people who said that their **only** priority was seeking God: David (Psalm 27:4) and Paul (Philippians 3:7-16).

David united the 12 tribes of Israel who had spent centuries bickering into a single nation. He defeated all Israel's enemies who attacked him and forced them to give tribute. He made the law of God the law of the land and the basis of the court system in Israel. He centralized the administration of the country, moved the worship of God to Jerusalem the new capital of the nation; which he had captured from the Jebusites. He wrote many songs for worship and organized the Levites for regular systematic work in the temple and organized the worship in song in the temple with choirs and instruments. He gathered materials for the new temple that his son was to build after he died. So his one priority did not seem to limit him too much.

Paul preached the Gospel and planted churches throughout Asia minor and Greece and oversaw the churches so that the extension of the Gospel ministry continued through them. He wrote most of the New Testament and raised up leaders for the Churches and the larger Christian movement and died in his fifties. He didn't seem pinched by his priority either.

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How did they do it? Blessing. There are two places where the image of a tree planted by streams of water is used of the person who makes drawing near to God a priority. In Psalm one the focus is on reading and meditating on God's Word. In Jeremiah 17:7-8 the focus is on trust. We who live in New England might be a little lost by the image. I've lived in desert places. When you look out over a dry, sandy, barren stretch of desert at times you will see a weird fringe of green trees in a meandering line. They are the only trees in sight and they seem to be flourishing in a place where the smallest blades of grass are brown and dry. The reason is that they are growing along a water course. The actual stream may be dry at the time, but that course supplies the tree so that it has little fear of drought.

God blesses us like that when we make seeking him a priority. His blessing is his invisible provision for fruitfulness hidden in the ordinary chain of cause and effect. You'll have more time because God will bless your efforts and make things go more smoothly. You'll get more done. Believe me if you make drawing near to God a priority you won't miss the time. In fact, the day will come when you will wonder how you did it without that time for him.

Your partner in the great work,
Rick Pinilla

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE JANUARY 9th!

Attention all church board chairs and/or secretaries – please get your Annual Reports in to the church office by Tuesday, January 9th for inclusion in this year's Annual Report.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28 this year. We are looking forward to seeing you all there.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Our next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, January 13 at 7:30am. Please see Jim Newcomb or Chris Scholtz for more information.

WOMEN 2 WOMEN

Our next Women 2 Women meeting will be on Thursday, January 18 at 6:30pm. This will be our movie night, and we will be meeting at the Parsonage (16 Kimball Street). We hope to see you there!

NOTE OF THANKS

Dear Pastor, Mission Board, and Congregation of First Baptist Church of Lebanon,

I am writing on behalf of John & Debbie Coats and their entire Mission Support Team to thank you for your faithful financial and prayer support the past year. It is such a blessing to see how the Coats' needs are met month after month by those who partner with them.

We've witnessed an added blessing these last few months as we've seen the Coats' vision for growing the Children's Program become a reality. What a joy it is to know that this outreach to children and youth has resulted in many souls being won to the Lord.

And so, we praise God for the part you have played in enabling the Coats' ministry to continue.

Wishing you and yours a very blessed Christmas and New Year.

*In Christ,
Carol & Mel*

Dear Friends in Lebanon,

We received the check for our work and want to say thanks! We know you have many challenges – thus especially touched by your support.

*With Love & Joy,
Ann & Bill Clemmer*