

CHAT WITH THE CHAPLAIN

I think that a big part of the everyday human experience has always included the innate desire to belong somewhere, to something or to someone, the most basic is no doubt 'family'. Beyond family we may still have a strong pull towards something more. It could be in business, clubs, organizations, associations, brotherhoods, religious affiliations, or even politics. The last of these might have to be approached with caution and a good deal of mouthwash. The list could be just about endless. The common thread here I believe has to do with 'Belonging', which suggests a 'Community' of sorts.

Along those lines, there's an old story told of a man we'll call Arnie. It seems that Arnie was a member of a certain church, and for reasons unknown, he had stopped going to services. After a few weeks, the pastor decided that he needed to pay old Arnie a visit. It was a chilly evening and the pastor found Arnie at home alone, in front of a great fire. Arnie let him in and gave him a seat in front of the fireplace. Arnie had guessed why the pastor was there, so after sitting back down, he waited. The pastor made himself at home, but for several minutes, nothing was said. At one point, the pastor grabbed a set of tongs, pulled a burning ember out of the fire and set it off to one side by itself. As Arnie watched, the ember's flame flickered, there was a momentary glow, then it's fire was out. Still, not a word had been spoken. The pastor looked at his watch and realized that it was time to go. He then stood up and used the tongs to put the dead ember back into the fire. Immediately, the ember began to glow, then finally began burning again, with the warmth of the coals around it. As the pastor began to leave, Arnie, now getting a little teary-eyed, said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for your fiery sermon. I'll be in church Sunday".

Everyone needs encouragement from time to time, some more than others. Outside of the 'Family', being part of a community (Brotherhood, etc.) of like-minded folks, whether it be ABATE or your Church, or, you pick, can be pretty important. In this day and age, if you are a Christian, it can be even more so. The message of the "Silent Sermon" we just read is that it's not a good plan to try to go it alone. In the book of Hebrews, 10:24 it says, ".....and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the 'Day' drawing near". In 1st Thessalonians 5:11 it says, "Comfort yourselves together and edify (To build up or strengthen) one another, even as ye also do." Family, friendship, fellowship, brotherhood, and belonging all go hand—in—hand. An early 20th century Scottish preacher, Oswald Chambers once said, "Human fellowship can go to great lengths, but not all the way. Fellowship with God can go to all lengths." And, Neil T. Anderson, head of Freedom In Christ Ministries has said, ".....In Christ we have the capacity for the fulfilling sense of belonging which comes from the intimate fellowship with God and other believers".

I believe that the most rewarding fellowship a person can experience is in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Notice that religion is not brought into this. In 1st Corinthians 1:9 it says, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord". Check it out, YOU won't be disappointed.

To finish up, the 23rd Psalm is all about relationship;

----The Lord is my Shepherd ----- That's a relationship!

----I shall not want -----That's supply!

----He maketh me to lie down in green pastures -----That's rest!

----He leadeth me beside still waters-----That's refreshment!

----He restoreth my soul-----That's healing!

----He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness-----That's guidance!

----For His Namesake-----That's purpose!

----Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death-----That's testing!

----I will fear no evil-----That's protection!

----For thou art with me-----That's faithfulness!

----Thy rod and thy staff comfort me-----That's discipline!

----Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies-----That's hope!

----Thou annointest my head with oil-----That's consecration (Dedicated to)!

----My cup runneth over-----That's abundance!

----Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life-----That's Blessing!

----And I will dwell in the house of the Lord-----That's security!

----Forever.-----That's eternity!

Face it, God's crazy about you!!

Wanted --- More bikers in Heaven!!

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