

Falls Fellowship

Healthy Congregations



A few years back church consultants began talking about “congregational health” instead of “church growth.” Church growth had become an overused term. If churches were not growing in measurable ways, such as attendance and offerings, then they were plateaued or even dying, so we thought. What we failed to realize is that a church can be plateaued and still engaged in effective ministry. Numbers are only a small part of the

story of a church’s effectiveness in Kingdom ministries. I am familiar with churches that dot rural communities in North Carolina that are doing their absolute best and, yet, they are very small and not growing in numbers. Some of them are in communities that are dying and there they stand tall as testimonies to the grace and mercy of God.

Today, I, too, prefer to talk about a church’s health. Numbers are part of the “diagnosis” of a church’s health, but they tell only part of the story. Sometimes the numbers go up even though the church is losing its authenticity as the church of Jesus Christ. Compromises may be made to increase the numbers. Showmanship may become the standard for worship rather than adoration of Christ. A church can attract people by becoming the best entertainment in town, rallying people around

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Back to the Basics — Discipling

Discipling is a process over time which involves many different people, many different settings and situations. And discipling generally begins in small groups and moves to the larger groups. Sometimes as small of groups as two people.

If you are a person today who has made your faith your own I would bet

you didn’t do that by just coming to church. I bet you had or have someone you can talk to one on one or a few you can talk to in a smaller group setting. And I bet you were convicted through the Word of God in your own reading and study of the God’s Word.

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I used to use a notebook called a “Weekly Planner” to organize my life. This



was in the days before we had electronic tools to use for planning our lives. The Weekly Planner had a block for every day of the year. Additional pages could be used as a journal to record important events from each day. About this time of the year I would receive the pages for the following year. I would look at those little blocks and muse over how I would fill them up. Some blocks were filled automatically like the blocks for Sundays. Then there were the blocks for noting annual activities like birthdays and anniversaries and holidays. Beyond that, there were blocks to fill as I planned my life for the coming year. In those days, almost every block would note an activity. That was exhilarating but also frightening. Exhilarating in the sense that I had freedom to plan an entire year; frightening in

See Blocks on page 3

Following Jesus — What Does It Mean?

I. Introduction:

Matthew 16:24-26 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

Jesus treats following him — including bearing a cross — as a make-or-break proposition.

Luke 14:27 “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

A disciple is defined as a follower; an adherent to the doctrines (that is, the teachings) of the one followed.

A disciple, then, is dedicated to learning and accepting Christ’s teachings and commandments.

Jesus said if you do not carry your cross you cannot be a disciple; that is, you cannot follow him.

There are several allusions in the New Testament about following Jesus.

Those who follow Jesus:
Walk in the light.

John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Are known by name.

John 10:3-4 To him [the shepherd] the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

Are honored by the Father.

John 12:26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

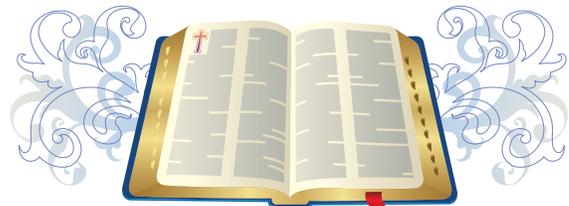
II. What does following Jesus mean?

I remember playing a childhood game “follow the leader.” The leader leads a line of followers (1 or more) through difficult places or maneuvers. Anyone who does not duplicate the leader’s course or actions is out of the game. The last follower in the game becomes the leader in the next game.

When Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” they left their nets and followed him for a lifetime.

To Levi (who we know as Matthew) Jesus said sim-

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Be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead!
— 1 Peter 1:6

Event Calendar

- October 1 — Deacon Ordination Service for Brandon Long 4 PM
- October 2 — Deacons’ Meeting 7 PM
- October 6 — Deadline for State Fair Worker’s Hygiene Kits
- October 14 — Men’s Breakfast – 8 AM
- October 15 — Quarterly Business Meeting 12 PM right after Church

Deacons

- Linwood Barham, Chairman 919-418-1162
- Frank Powell, Vice Chairman 919-604-1285
- Julie Allen, Secretary 919-274-7160
- Tommy Brown 843-446-6540
- Alan Watkins 919-793-5548
- Brandon Long 252-903-4662

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Healthy Congregations continued ...

emotional social issues and compromising the biblical demands of discipleship. It can be growing

As I work with you as your Interim Pastor I want to move the conversation we are having to church health. It's all right to be a small church if we are achieving God's purpose for us. Numbers are not the whole story. I long for FBC to be a healthy congregation which is growing in the Lord, though that might not be accompanied by dramatic numerical growth. Look for me to address this subject soon on a Sunday morning in worship.

— Tom Jenkins, Interim Pastor



Discipling continued ...

Discipling does not and can not take place in any person's life without relationships. Discipling requires relationships. And God created us as for fellowship with Him and with others. He created us to have relationships.

And what that means is if we are not involved in other people's lives, and not just other Christians life's, but with non-Christians, discipling is not taking place. Not as we see it in the Bible.

We have to continue to be witnesses and not just through the church as we think of it today. But be witnesses as Jesus told the apostles to be witnesses.

— Mark Engler



Blocks continued ...

the sense that each block represented a day that would soon be gone and a year would be gone and soon life would be over. Everybody has an allotment of blocks. We make choices about how we use them.

How are you using the blocks of life marked for Sunday? I know how some of you use them because I see you at Falls on Sundays. But I don't see some of you. Some of you are not able to come and I pray for you. But others make the choice not to come and I worry about them. I wonder how they fill the blocks for Sunday and why attending church must not be important to them. I'm not being judgmental; I'm just wondering why for some of our members the blocks which represent Sundays on the calendar of life don't have "Falls Baptist Church" penciled in.

— Tom Jenkins, Interim Pastor

October Birthdays

- 3 Vivian Sherrell
- 4 Dewey Stewart
- 14 Allison Watkins
- 16 Tracie Odham
- 17 Melanie Barham
- 17 Stacie Creech
- 18 Pat Jenks
- 25 Bill Allen
- 25 R. L. Harris
- 30 Hubert Jenks





Following Jesus continued ...

ply, “Follow me,” and he got up and left his tax collector’s booth and followed Jesus.

These and the rest of the twelve followed Jesus literally from place to place, observing, learning ... following him.

But Jesus does not expect all of us to traverse the territories of Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Casearea Philippi, and Decapolis. His meaning in the scriptures we will examine today is something other than literal, mechanical actions.

Following Jesus is a lifelong vocation of adhering to his teachings and commands, and emulating his values, attitude, and actions.

— *Continued next month!!*

Help Wanted — Make A Joyful Noise!

Scripture tells us in Psalm 100 verses one and two: *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

Falls Baptist Church Choir needs you to help us make that joyful noise. We’re gaining new members — come be part of it! Preparations for Christmas music are starting soon, new voices are always welcome!

Don’t use the excuse you can’t sing — most of us can’t sing, but that doesn’t stop us from making that joyful noise to the Lord.

Choir practice is Wednesdays at 7:15 PM. We have a lot of fun and the fellowship is hard to beat. Join us!

Newsletter articles needed

Our goal is to have a monthly newsletter for the rest of the year and then look at our needs and decide what we will do in 2018.

But, we need news and articles from all of our committees to let everyone know we you are doing and when you are doing it.

Communication is very important, so send your news and articles to Frank at fbpowell@mac.com

Thanks!



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