

# Family Matters

August 2008

## Neighbors as “rock-rolling” & “hand holding” priests

*“The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.” So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up — one on one side, one on the other — so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.*

Ex 17:8-13 NIV

Our statement of mission is to be “neighbors for life.” Patterned after the “good Samaritan” of Luke 10, “neighbors” are Christ followers who love people, extend themselves to see others recover from the brokenness caused by life on this planet, train them to do the same kind of recovery work, and then send them out to be neighbors for life in their own circle of influence. We believe everyone has a role to play and an essential part of seeing God’s work advance. Significance in the advancement of God’s kingdom isn’t necessarily the work of a prominent few, but rather the servant-hearted work of all.

As we read the story of Israel from the above text, it is easy to see that Joshua’s victory is directly attributed to the staff of God. This staff, which symbolizes God’s authority and His protection; when raised upward by Moses toward the ongoing battle, Israel maintained the edge in the battle. Though God’s grace is evident in the outcome, the means by which He worked was through people we would commonly overlook; especially in our society that idolizes the rich, the famous and the powerful. However, God’s purposes on earth are most often done through people to people. Yes, He does miracles apart from any human interaction, but it is one of His greatest delights to use the faith-filled actions of one of His kids in order to heal others from disease, see them rescued from addictions and harmful habits, and brought to wholeness.

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Look at the different ones God used in this story to secure victory. Joshua led the army - the role of leadership. Moses held the staff of God in his hands -the role of intercession for others. Aaron and Hur rolled a rock and lifted Moses’ hands -the role of service. Which was more important to victory? Joshua filled the most prominent role, but Moses’ effective service of intercession was dependent upon the rock rolling and hand holding efforts of Aaron and Hur. Significance in God’s kingdom isn’t tied to prominence, but rather to service. Victory for all was secured by the simple, but significant service of two men who served someone who also was doing a less than prominent job -Moses was praying. Jesus said that greatness in His kingdom is reserved for those who willingly serve others

(Matt 20:28). Giving ourselves in service to others is often less than glorious or prominent, but this is the pathway to experiencing the life God intended. Victory - even the word sounds sweet and satisfying, is God's planned purpose for His kids. Victory is the life experience of knowing God's love and grace producing life in you and through you to others. Victory is secured through interdependence -through service one to another. As "neighbors for life," Jesus is eagerly waiting to use us in mighty ways to see many, many people introduced to Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer and Soon Coming King. This is our commission and our privilege. Join me in growing excited to see Jesus grow our community in size and influence in Frederick County - all for the sake others.

Pastor Dave

## A Time to Remember & Give Thanks

Did you know that this August marks our 27th anniversary on the New Life campus? This is a great time to pause and give the Lord thanks for His ongoing faithfulness to the New Life family.

For those of you who haven't heard our story, here it is in a nutshell. In 1976 a small ad appeared for one day only in the newspaper, "Farm on 22 acres—\$135,000." The church had only \$95,000 but when our former Pastor Fuss added a gift write-off of \$8,000 a year for five years the old dairy farm on Rt. 180 became ours!

There was no question that this was going to be a major project. The farm had once been a thriving operation, but wear, weather, and weeds had taken a severe toll. As on most abandoned farms, broken down out-buildings and piles of old machinery and junk were everywhere. One of the priority purchases at the time was a dump truck to haul away many tons of this "excess inventory."

Turning the farmhouse into a parsonage was an immediate need and work began right away. By Labor Day 1977, the parsonage was habitable enough for Pastor Lloyd & Gwen to move in.

Work on "the barn" began in earnest in the fall of 1978. Rotted wood, old siding, milking stall equipment, and a concrete floor in the basement all had to be removed. Besides the actual work, it took a couple of well-scheduled miracles to get the job done. The first was a timely thunderstorm which rolled back part of the roof which resulted in an insurance payment toward the new one. Next, just when finances were critical, a man whom we'd never seen before, or since, showed up with a check to cover the cost of enclosing one end of the barn.

Our first service was held in our newly renovated barn on August 21, 1981. It was truly a day to rejoice. ....and still is. "Lord, thank you for this beautiful campus and a place we all can call home."