

Central Gwinnett News

THE CENTRAL GWINNETT CONGREGATION



(Some thoughts from the Benevolence Ministry)

By Ken Watson

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load." (Galatians 6:2-5)

During a recent mid-week service that was held in family groups, we were taking a look at some of the many "one another" passages found in the Bible. One of those scriptures is the one from the book of Galatians quoted above. On the surface, there appears to be a contradiction in this passage. The first part of the scripture commands us to "carry each other's burdens" while verse 5 admonishes each of us to "carry his own load"! So which one is correct? As it turns out, both are. We are responsible for carrying our own load as Christians, exemplified by such behavior as responsible stewardship of our resources, and working hard for our living so we can share what we have with others (Eph 4:28).

However, there are times where our load becomes a "burden" that we cannot manage on our own. It is at these times that our brothers and sisters step in and help to shoulder the load. These burdens may be spiritual or physical. God tells us that these times come for our ultimate benefit, in some cases (James 1:2-3). How can having burdens be beneficial?

They can create opportunities for others to give and sacrifice, and we who have the burden can learn perseverance from what we suffer. Ultimately, if we handle the burden in a righteous way, God is glorified.

The Benevolence Ministry would like to take this opportunity to commend the congregation on its generosity, both collectively and individually. While Peter Berry and I have had the honor to oversee this ministry, I certainly don't want to forget the hard work of Glenn Hayes and Danny Emmett who respectively help to distribute and manage our benevolence budget.

We have had the opportunity to observe the brothers and sisters of the congregation literally help to carry one another's burdens. This has not only taken the form of monetary contributions to the benevolence fund on Thursday nights, but also your contributions to the food pantry and in some cases, individuals merely seeing a need and taking care of it quietly and without fanfare. This summer in particular, many children were given the opportunity to attend the Swamp who otherwise would not have been able to. Be assured that many have been helped with situations that amounted to you (the congregation) stepping in to shoulder burdens that could not be borne alone. God will not forget how you have supplied what others lack!

Elders

Steve Galbreath
Alan Rouse

Evangelist

Richard Alawaye

Women's Ministry & Welfare

Sarah Alawaye
Roxanne Galbreath
Sherry Rouse

Teens

Todd and Tracy Reynolds

Deacons

Birt Anglin
Peter Berry
Steve Collier
Danny Emmett
Bill Francis
Patrick Freeman
Joe Hartline
Glenn Hayes
Kendall Knight
Karl Lynn
Russ McGarr
Jeff Mueller
Todd Reynolds
Todd Shultz
Dan Stehr
Ken Watson

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 18 11am-2pm Women's Luncheon
(Holiday Inn, Decatur, GA)
Aug. 25 10am-1pm Financial Workshop
(Greg Garcia, Athens, GA)
Sept. 1-2 Southeast Singles Retreat
(Atlanta)
Oct. 5-7 World Leadership Conference
(Los Angeles, CA)

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A Chance to Serve

By Jim & Chandra Dew

In Luke 8:1-8, Jesus told His disciples a parable to teach them to pray and to never give up.

After Chandra and I became engaged in February 2005, we began to pray to God to show us how we could serve Him as a married couple. In June of 2006, about six months after our marriage we came to Central Gwinnett on a visit. We were surprised when several people came up to us and asked us if we had come to lead the singles ministry. Later we found out that Richard Alawaye had asked the congregation to begin praying for someone to step up and lead the singles in Central Gwinnett. We agreed to accept the chance to serve God when Richard and Sara Alawaye asked us to take on the task of creating a family out of the singles. So through prayer, patience, hospitality, feeding and facing the scriptures, God met two needs, our need to serve Him and Central Gwinnett's need for leadership in the singles ministry.

In the beginning we immediately opened our home to any single, yet only a few of the approximately 40 singles in the ministry took us up on our offer. Satan attacked us by trying to use disappointment and fear. To counter Satan's attack we started praying for God's favor and guidance. I continued to feed the family spiritually (bible talk every other Friday) and Chandra, concerned about their long day after work, decided she have dinner prepared during each bible talk. In addition, once a month, we gathered together and took input from any of the singles that wished to help, and we began to plan a monthly calendar of events designed to help bring us closer to one another. Our prayers had been answered and we sang praises to God when, at a communion dinner we had for Easter 2007, our home overflowed with singles. People were literally wall-to-wall and once they sat down could not easily stand up and move around. We realized at that time we needed a bigger home and began to pray to God to make it happen. In May 2007 moved into our new home! God's gift (a larger home) allowed the singles to put together a Jack and Jill wedding party for Ann Fiotte and Antonio Santiago and their families. Ann's family was so impressed by her church family that they could not stop talking about the event. In the past, Ann's family persecuted the church, but today they feel free to celebrate with us.

So through prayer, patience, hospitality, studying and implementing God's word the singles in Central Gwinnett have transformed themselves into a family. Just as Jethro realized that Moses could not meet all of the needs of the Israelites, our wise leaders have realized that we need family groups in order to be close enough to each other to meet the needs of the Central Gwinnett flock.

We are grateful to the singles for giving us the honor of serving them and allowing us to be a part of building God's family. So remember Philippians 4:6 as you seek God and God's family: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."



Do Gooders

By Sherry Rouse

Galations 6:9-10 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

We as women love to serve and meet others' needs. We rally to someone who has just become sick and overwhelm them with love, food, cards, etc. But what if this goes on for a long period of time? Our tendency is to forget about them and move on to the next person. Sisters, I want to implore you to not forget about the chronically sick and those who have sick children.

Right now in Central Gwinnett we have two families who have very sick babies. The most powerful thing you can do is pray for them daily. But please let them know with communications that you are praying for them. This is so encouraging to them. They face a roller coaster of emotions every day as blood work comes back good or bad and as they do the things they need to do daily to help their children survive. You will also be amazed at their faith and perseverance!

Amy and Jermaine Wiley's baby, Xavier, is in Florida off and on because of his recent liver transplant. Pray that he does not reject his liver and that he will be healthy enough to come home. You can call Jessica Mueller at 770-492-0544 to get updates and find out how you can help. You can send cards of encouragement to their address here: 2025 Idlewood Road, Apt. K5, Tucker, GA 30084.

Selena & Joel Brand continue to face a myriad of needs with Dakota and his new feeding program. She has to fix (purrée) many different foods daily along with feeding Daniel every 3 hours. You can read about their adventures on their care pages at: www.carepages.com and type in DanielBrand or DakotaBrand (one word) as the care page name. You can also write them encouraging comments at those sites. Cynthia Double (770-630-6188) is coordinating help for the Brands (they could use help washing clothes & dishes, holding the baby while he feeds, and organizing cabinets) and Sharon Ross (770-513-6224h, 404-819-5573) is coordinating meals every other day.

We also have some fabulous women here in Central Gwinnett who are not able to drive because of health issues. They would love to be able to get out and go to the store occasionally. They need help getting to church or getting to a Women of Strength meeting. You will be blessed with the time spent with them. (Myrna Daniels, Buel Haynes, Cathy

Jordan, and Deb Shanks are in this situation, and there may be others we are not aware of.)

I'm sure you are all aware of other needs within your family group, neighborhood, or workplace. Let's get out there and serve those who need help, especially those in our fellowship. And don't get tired of helping one specific person. If you can adopt one and specifically take care of that person, wonderful! We can all be shining stars in our family groups, neighbourhoods, or at work by the way we serve others. To God we give the glory for any and all good that we do each day.

WEEDS

By Nancy Berry

I've never been Green Thumb Woman. Trying to help in my grandmother's garden as a child, I hoed my foot open, which seemed to be a tip-off. I'm pretty sure anyone who knows me knows I'd rather watch a good movie than work in the yard any day. But a nice garden adds to the welcoming ambiance of a home, so I get out there and try to keep the good stuff growing and the weeds out.

Since I'm not a natural-born gardener, I spend a lot of my outdoor work time trying to find deeper meaning than just grubbing in the dirt. Here are some of my reflections on the parallels between weeds and sin.

🔍 **You need to know what belongs in the garden and what doesn't.** If you don't know the nature of what you planted on purpose versus what inserted itself, you don't know what to pull. **Hebrews 5:14** talks about how the mature train themselves to distinguish good from evil. The main danger in gardening is that I might pull up a good plant thinking it's a weed. But the main danger in my spiritual life is that I might not distinguish sin as sin, might not take it seriously, and will let it grow deeper roots (for instance, not seeing pride as pride). **Matthew 7:16-20** points out the way you tell good plants from bad plants – you can tell by what fruit results from their presence in your life. **Romans 11:16** says that if the root is holy, so is the branch. If there's an attitude or activity in your life that slows down your growth in your relationship with God, time to get serious about pulling it out.

Family Group Leaders

Peter & Nancy Berry	Suwanee	678-376-1878
Steve & Barbara Collier	Lilburn	770-717-5784
Jim & Chandra Dew	Lilburn	770-330-3479
Danny & Cynthia Doble	Lilburn	770-931-0601
Audie & Jackie Flowers	Snellville	770-277-5749
Karl & Donna Lynn	Snellville	770-978-4747
Russ & Sue McGarr	Lilburn	770-381-5045
Alvin & Beatrice Modest	Snellville	678-344-0061
Jeff & Jessica Mueller	Tucker	770-492-0544
Joseph & Lisa Washington	L'ville	678-407-0306
Ken & Kat Watson	Suwanee	678-376-2677

Deacons Directory

Karl Lynn	Single Parents	770-978-4747
Ken Watson	Benevolence	678-376-2677
Peter Berry	Benevolence	678-376-1878
Patrick Freeman	Kingdom Kids	770-921-1811
Glenn Hayes	Kingdom Kids	770-985-6921
Dan Stehr	Visitation	770-925-2943
Bill Francis	Visitation	770-806-8645
Todd Reynolds	Middle School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
Joe Hartline	Teens-Parents	770-277-4765
Danny Emmett	Hope, Events	770-985-4542
Todd Shultz	Communications	770-277-4276
Birt Anglin	Ushering	678-849-0180
Jeff Mueller	Order of Worship	770-492-0544
Kendall Knight	Music Service	770-972-6887

<u>Date</u>	<u>Contribution</u>
July 1	\$7,771
July 8	\$7,488
July 15	\$7,411
July 22	\$7,287
July 29	\$6,998



WEEDS

(continued)

☞ **You need to know the characteristics of what you're pulling, and be prepared.** Weeds have defense systems, and so does sin. Some weeds are thorny to the touch, with their defenses on the outside. **Galatians 5:19-21** explains how some sins are obvious; **Matthew 13:22** and **Luke 8:14** talk about how thorny plants choke spiritual growth, making us unfruitful or keeping us from maturing. Some weeds have a more subtle effect, like poison ivy, a chemical defense that doesn't show up right away but leaves us miserable afterward. **1 Timothy 5:24** describes some sins as obvious and others as trailing behind us. **Psalms 90:8** states that God exposes our secret sins. In either case, we need to get the sin out of our lives, whether obvious or subtle, because sin of any kind leads to spiritual death (**Proverbs 14:12; James 1:14-15**). But don't underestimate your enemy who plants the weeds; as you would use heavy gloves before handling thorns or poison ivy, use Scripture to protect you as you deal with your sins!

☞ **Know what will happen if you *don't* deal with the weeds.** They'll take over the garden! **Romans 8:13** points out the consequences of living by the sinful nature or of putting its misdeeds to death by the Spirit; either one or the other dominates your spiritual life, but they can't coexist if you want to thrive. **Proverbs 28:13** presents the choice of concealing your sin or confessing and renouncing it, and the results of each; **Psalms 66:18-19** illustrates how our sin keeps God from hearing our prayers. We need to keep weeding, not turning a blind eye; we also need to help one another weed, because no one has an objective eye in gardening or in life!

☞ **The only way to get the weed out is to get the root.** Pulling only the visible part up, or chopping it off at ground level, only leads to the weed coming back, sometimes to it spreading faster. Some weeds, like dandelions, have deep roots that require digging straight down; sometimes the root is longer than the weed is tall. Some weeds, like the clover-ish thing trying to take over my garden at the moment, have a root system that consists of threadlike, spreading roots that break off easily when I try to pull them up and must be pulled with patience and careful attention to get all the root so it doesn't just grow right back. These different types remind me of **Psalms 19:12-13**, hidden sins and willful sins, that need to be weeded out of my life. **Hebrews 12:15** points out the dangers of letting a bitter root grow; if we don't get the root of bitterness out of our lives, it causes trouble for the life it grows in and defiles many other lives as well. In **Matthew 15:13**, Jesus says that any plant God didn't plant will be pulled up by the roots; we need to have the same attitude!

By attacking the weeds that try to take over our spiritual lives, we can have a good harvest, as described in **1 Corinthians 3:6-9** and **Hebrews 12:15**. And a great one to close with: **Colossians 2:6-7**: *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”*