

The Messenger

The Atlanta Church of Christ
in Gwinnett



40 Days and 40 Nights

By Richard Alawaye

The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.
(2 Chronicles 30:27)

Two weeks ago, we all decided as a church to petition God through our

prayer and fasting chain. I believe we all understand that we need God's power and Spirit in the fight to reach Gwinnett County with the message of Jesus in this lifetime. We are praying and fasting and petitioning God to move in our lives and in our church. The exciting thing is to realize that God is hearing us and our prayers are reaching up to God's throne in heaven. God's people experienced that in 2 Chronicles 30:27. What we are doing is having a huge impact in our lives and in the lives of people around us.

In Mark 9:2-29, we read about Jesus on the mountain of Transfiguration. Jesus had taken Peter, James and John up the mountain to pray. While they were up there, we are told Elijah and Moses appeared from nowhere and these men were talking with Jesus. Jesus, Moses and Elijah are the only three people we know of in the bible that ever fasted for 40 days and 40 nights: Jesus in Matthew 4:2, Moses (who did it twice) in Exodus 34:28 and Elijah in 1 Kings 19:8.

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Elders

Steve Galbreath
Alan Rouse

Evangelist

Richard Alawaye

Women's Ministry & Welfare

Sarah Alawaye
Roxanne Galbreath
Sherry Rouse

Teens

Todd and Tracey
Reynolds

Deacons

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri., June 6: Men's Activity (7pm)

Sun., June 8:
Appointment of Gary Roberson as "Teacher"
New Teaching Rotation for Kingdom Kids
Start of Sunday Classes for Adults

Sun., June 22: Middle School Skating
Skate-A-Long, Lilburn

Sun., June 29: Special Contribution

Sat., July 19: Men's Prayer in the Park (7am)

UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKERS

Sam Powell, New York City COC, NY
Mike Fix, Granite City COC, NH
Joey Harris, Augusta COC, GA

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40 Days and 40 Nights

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Have you ever noticed how when God wants to do mighty things in the lives of people, He often invites them up a mountain to meet with Him. Why? I believe when we have that mountaintop experience, it changes our perspective about things. It is hard to see clearly in the valley. We must go up to God to be able to see things through heaven's eyes. Nothing happens down in the valley.

There are at least three things we will experience individually and collectively during this time of prayer and fasting.

1. **Purity** - Satan tried to get Jesus to sin after his prayer and fasting time (Luke 4:1-13). Satan wanted Jesus to take matters into his own hands and act independently of God. Notice how Jesus was able to stay pure by using the scriptures to ward off each temptation. It is hard to sin when you are praying and fasting. When you are tuned in to God through prayer and fasting, it is easier to withstand Satan's temptations.
2. **Sustenance** - God fed Elijah through his angels as he fled from Jezebel in 1 Kings 19:1-8. When we pray and fast we truly see God sustaining us. When we get hungry, God gives us the power and strength to continue through the day. That is exciting! The Holy Spirit literally helps us get through the day.
3. **Radiance** - When Moses came down from his mountaintop experience with God, the people noticed something radically different in Moses (Exodus 34:29-33). His face was glowing to the point that he had to put a veil over it. When you spend time with God in prayer and fasting, you will be radiant. There will be a bounce in your step. The Holy Spirit will radiate through you. We have started to experience purity, sustenance and radiance.

I believe this is just the beginning. It is exciting to see us repenting and getting back to what God has called us to. We are talking to people about God, we are getting into the Word with them, we are inviting them to church, our "Life Talks", etc. God is at work! God is blessing and will continue to bless our repentance. God willing, we should be having another baptism and a couple of "restorations" in the next couple of weeks. I believe our prayers are reaching heaven. Let us continue to glorify God and to God be all the glory.

The cities in Gwinnett County that we have been praying for are Auburn, Berkeley Lake, Braselton, Buford, Dacula, Duluth, Grayson, Hoschton, Lawrenceville, Lilburn, Loganville, Norcross, Rest Haven, Snellville, Sugar Hill, Suwanee, and Tucker.



Staying Joyful Through Hardships

By Deborah Shanks

This seems to be an oxymoron, defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as: *a combination of contradictory words* (as cruel kindness). Is it possible to be joyful during hardship? Being a veteran of hardships I can assure you, it's not only possible but easier to go through hardships being joyful than any other way! We can start by looking at one of my favorite verses, breaking it down step by step.

"...strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. 'We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,' they said." Acts 14:22

1. God doesn't want us to suffer alone! He expects us to share what's going on in our lives with sisters. Even Jesus needed His friends in the garden of Gethsemane before being captured by Roman soldiers. When His friends couldn't stand watch with Him to be the encouragement He needed, **Luke 22:43** tells us His Father had ***"an angel appear to Him and strengthen Him."*** If Jesus needed others during His time of need, how much more do we need others during our times of need?
2. Why are others required to strengthen and encourage us to remain true to the faith? Faith is sorely tested during hardships. We begin to lose faith in the power and effectiveness of prayer; in the sincerity of friends and loved ones; in the competency of health professionals, in God's love and care for us as individuals, etc. How important is faith? **Hebrews 11:6a** tells us ***"without faith it is impossible to please God."***
3. Next, the disciples were reminded they must go through hardships. The key word is ***"must."*** They weren't told they might or might not, but they ***MUST*** go through hardships. It's much better knowing "up front" what we're going to face rather than wonder. God doesn't throw us surprise punches; Satan's the one who does that.
4. How did they get past hardship? They went through it without any shortcuts or detours. There wasn't any backing up or going into hibernation in hopes the situation would be gone after waking up. The only way to proceed was to go directly ***through*** it.

5. This next one may be the toughest challenge. We have to be prepared to go through ***many*** hardships. God is not about blindsiding us, and He wants us to know what to expect so that we can prepare as much as possible, even if specific circumstances aren't known. Our prayer lives need to be active, not rusty. We need to be an active part of the Body; not allowing ourselves to atrophy as an arm in a cast does after being encased in plaster for months, coming out weak, ineffective, shriveled, and not as strong as other body parts. We should want to be a healthy, contributing part of the Body, ready to serve any way we can. Knowing in advance we're going to have multiple hardships, we shouldn't fall apart, or be devastated thinking God's abandoned us, or that we've been hand-picked as a modern day Job.
6. Because we've discussed hardships the most, it may seem that hardships are the most important part of the verse. However, we cannot ever be fooled or lulled into focusing on the hardships. Doing so is a sure-fire way to kill all joy. Yet, we have to acknowledge the importance and necessity of hardships because that's how we learn perseverance. **James 1:2-4** tells us ***"whenever we face trials of many kinds, we know that the testing of our faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*** I've omitted the first part of verse two to emphasize the sequence of how things work. The first part begins: ***"Stay joyful whenever we face trials..."*** See what we're learning?
7. God and His kingdom are the most important centers in our lives. Staying focused on them is our secret weapon in being joyful during the toughest of hardships. How do we stay focused? Be in church on Sundays and at midweek and enjoy great fellowship. If we physically cannot make it, study out what was missed on the website, stay connected via phone calls, e-mail, visits. (If you can't drive, ask others to come to you. Only pride keeps you from doing this). Most importantly, stay in God's Word and in prayer with Him one on One and pray with others over the phone, in person, every possible opportunity. This is making God our life and not hardship. Joy is the outcome.

The end of the verse tells us about our reward. It couldn't be more precious, valuable or wonderful, and there's no higher honor. It's why we live our entire lives as Christians. **Romans 14:17** tells us ***"the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*** **Thessalonians 1:5** says: ***"All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering."*** Offer me the world without hardships, on one hand, and on the other hand, hardships with the Kingdom of God. Which do I choose? Give me hardships every time! Which do you choose?

Update from the Children's Ministry

By Patrick Freeman

Hope you are enjoying the beginning of summer! Given that school is now out, I'm sure your kids are!

Thanks to everyone for participating in the Children's Ministry workshop on Thursday, May 22nd, and for all who helped plan it: Glenn and Sheila Hayes, Audie Flowers, Wanda Ousley and Dan Stehr. A thank you also goes to Ward Rutland, Jeff and Jessica Mueller, Tami Goodwin and the other "participants" in the crowd (who added some humor to the event) for volunteering their time to help make the workshop a success.

It's servants like these, along with Mary Rutland, Cathi Stehr, Jackie Flowers and Jim Ousley, who put in countless hours to make sure that our children can attend safe and spiritual classes every Sunday and Midweek. And, of course, even though we have so many people working behind the scenes like this, our classes would not be possible without the great hearts of our teachers. Thanks to all the individuals who have taught in the past and continue to volunteer.

In the recent workshop, we mentioned several upcoming changes in the Children's Ministry, which include:

- Sunday lessons as the primary lesson and the Midweek lessons as supplementary;
- Synchronizing the lessons between Sunday and Midweek so that the children are receiving consistent instruction;
- An effort to incorporate healthier snack choices for Sundays;
- Formalizing the registration process for Midweek classes.

We would like to begin having E-Kids classes at Midweek services on a consistent basis. Please consider whether you can help make this happen by volunteering to serve in this very important ministry (thank you to those who have already signed up to help). I believe this ministry especially is where Jesus would spend a lot of his time if He were here. The irony is that the E-Kids ministry is one in which you get much more out of than you could ever put into it. Please contact Patrick or Glenn if you would like to help.

Once again, we greatly appreciate everyone's efforts and look forward to continuing to see God bless our children through this great ministry!

Deacon's Directory

Karl Lynn	New Members	770-978-4292
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	High School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
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

Contribution

Apr 27	\$7,415
May 4	\$9,090
May 11	\$5,261
May 18	\$6,781
May 25	\$6,137

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
James & Quiana Martinez	L'ville	678-985-5511
Alvin & Beatrice Modest	Snellville	678-344-0061
Jeff & Jessica Mueller	Tucker	770-492-0544
Ricky & Bridgett Roberson	Snellville	770-879-0868
Joseph & Lisa Washington	L'ville	678-407-0306
Ken & Kat Watson	Suwanee	678-376-2677