



Messenger

Volume 16, Issue 1

January 2016

Coming Events

January 22 Gathering
Dalzell UMC
Dalzell SC
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

Board Meeting
February 8 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

February 26 Gathering
First Christian Church
Columbia, SC
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

Board Meeting
March 14 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

March Gathering
March 18
Open

Board Meeting
April 11 @ 7 pm
Windsor UMC

April No Gathering Walks
Men's 7-10
Women's 14-17

Board Meeting
May 9 @ 7 p-m
Windsor UMC

May Gathering
May 27
Open

Board Meeting
June 13 @ 7 pm
Windsor UMC

June 24 Gathering
Lexington UMC
Lexington, SC
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

From your Community Director

I love springtime...I love to hear the birds sing and see the wildflowers growing along the side of the road. I love the rainstorms that creep up in the afternoons because I know the flowers bloom brighter and fuller as a result. But the number one reason I love springtime so much is because it reminds me of the cycle of life and the hand God has in our everyday. A green springtime always follows the barren winter. We don't see this as dramatically in South Carolina as do people living in the north, but the Dogwoods and the Oaks in my backyard now stripped bare of leaves will soon sport beautiful green leaves where they will be gray just a little longer.

In the song "Every Season" by Nichole Nordeman, she writes, "And everything that's new has bravely surfaced Teaching us to breathe/ What was frozen through is newly purposed Turning all things green/ So it is with You And how You make me new With every season's change/ And so it will be As You are re-creating me – Summer, autumn, winter, spring." This is why I love Spring, and this is why I love the Walk to Emmaus. Every pilgrim walks into the weekend in some season of their life. They may be in summer days and things are going along just fine and life is good. They may be in autumn where things are okay but a chill creeps in on a brisk wind every now and then. Or they may be in the winter – bleak and gray with heavy clouds surrounding them. But through the three-day process of the Emmaus experience, EVERYONE finishes Sunday in the Spring.

We are reminded through agape love that God created us and He recreates us daily. Participating in Emmaus doesn't mean we will live perpetually in the "springtime" of life, but it does remind us that they will come – and soon – when we live as He asks and walk with Him in our 4th Day. "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32.

I ask you to consider what Emmaus has meant to you. What did your three-day experience mean? How have you changed in your 4th Day? And now...? What are you going to DO about it? Consider becoming a sponsor. Join a reunion group. Serve on an Emmaus Walk team to serve new pilgrims. Volunteer your service as a kitchen worker. See our website, <http://www.midlandsemmaus.com/> where you can find forms for volunteering. The purpose of Emmaus is not to serve Emmaus, but we do need some hands and feet (and voices) to continue in this ministry. It is my prayer that the Walk to Emmaus three-day experience is such an important part of your faith journey that you can't hide it under a bushel, but let it shine for all of your 4th Day!

Charles



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How to Have a Daily Devotional Time

by Mary Lou Redding

The phrases "doing devotions" or "having devotions" may sound foreign or weird. These phrases are simply ways people describe spending time with God by reading the Bible (and other Christian literature) and praying. Why bother to read the Bible and pray? Why is having a regular time with God important? We spend time with God in order to deepen and strengthen our relationship with the One who created us and yearns to be with us. But because we are all different and because each of us has a unique relationship with God, no one devotional pattern will work for everyone. And no one way works for anyone all of the time. Experiment until you find the time of day, content, and length of time spent that helps you feel connected with God.

BASIC PATTERN

Begin your devotional time by quieting yourself. Take a few deep breaths and become still. Some people light a candle or say a simple prayer such as, "O God, open my heart to hear your message to me in the words I read." Then read a short passage in the Bible and some additional reading. A resource such as The Upper Room can guide you in choosing scripture passages, and its witness from other believers can help you connect the words of the Bible with concerns of everyday life. At the end of your reading time, be silent and wait to see what words, feelings, or images rise in your heart or tug at your thoughts. Notice what situations or people come to mind. Consider how the words or images connect with your life; then pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to see what God may be saying to you through what you have read, thought, and felt.

Say a prayer, asking God to help you follow the guidance you have received and to be with the people who came to mind during your reading and reflection. You may want to record your thoughts and feelings in a notebook or journal, to help you remember what God has been saying to you. Many people find it helpful to write about concerns and to write a prayer as a way to end their devotional time. If you are just beginning to take time for reading the Bible and praying, plan to spend about ten minutes. As you become more comfortable with the process, you may find yourself spending a longer time.

OTHER IDEAS TO HELP YOU

Start small. Use a resource such as The Upper Room that provides short, daily readings and guides you to look at small portions of scripture. Don't start off planning to spend 30 or 45 minutes.



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Keep it manageable. Don't set impossible goals such as reading an entire chapter of the Bible three times a day, every day. Choose a discipline that you can stick with. Look for help. If you are unfamiliar with the Bible, put a bookmark in the contents page of the Bible you use so you can turn there to find where each book begins. This will save time and help you avoid frustrated searching for a particular reading. If you need help finding something to read that "speaks" to you, ask people at church for suggestions of what they have found helpful. Find a spiritual "buddy." Ask a friend, co-worker, or someone at church to become your devotions partner. Then, each day, call or e-mail one another to discuss what you have read and what connections you make between the reading and your concerns. Remember the value of having a pattern. Finding a regular time and place to read the Bible and the day's meditation in The Upper Room helps most people be more consistent in turning their hearts to God. Regularity can become a rhythm that comforts, and having a familiar time and place may help you to settle into God's presence more easily. Remember the value of being flexible. Doing exactly the same things in the same way can become stale over time. If events in your day interfere with your usual pattern, find another time to read and reflect, or turn your mind to God by singing a Christian song. Don't let a pattern control you and cause you discomfort. The point is to spend time with God, not to do this in a particular way.

Be creative. Try something new from time to time. Here are some possibilities: Read your meditation outside. Write your prayers in a journal. Take a "prayer walk" with the intent of looking for God, and pray in response to the people and situations that come to mind as you walk. Listen to Christian music and talk to God about what it brings to mind. The most important thing to remember as we try to grow closer to God is that God is already reaching out to us. God is the one who gives us the desire to grow, and God wants us to grow. We just keep showing up, even when we don't particularly feel holy or loving or eager. And we can trust that if we do so, God will show up, too.

Mary Lou Redding is the former Editorial Director of The Upper Room magazine and author of the books *The Power of a Focused Heart*, *While We Wait*, *Breaking and Mending*, and *The Lord's Prayer*.

Obituary

Eddie Ruple COLUMBIA - A funeral service for Robert Edward "Eddie" Ruple, 62, will be held at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 20, 2015, at First Christian Church Disciples of Christ. The family will receive friends from 1:15 until 2:00 p.m. at the church prior to the service. The burial will be at 1:00 p.m. Monday, December 21, 2015, in Magnolia Cemetery, Reevesville, S.C. Dunbar Funeral Home, Devine Street Chapel, is assisting the family. Mr. Ruple died Thursday, December 17, 2015. Born in Walterboro, he was a son of the late John Henry Ruple Sr. and Mattie Belle Bryant Ruple. Eddie was a graduate of Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science, worked as a **funeral director** and embalmer for many years, and was an avid Harley-Davidson fan. He attended First Christian Church. Surviving are his wife of 36 years, Lucy Strom Ruple; children, Robert E. "Robbie" Ruple Jr. (Amy) of West Columbia, Joseph A. "Joey" Ruple of Lexington, Johnathan Trey Ruple of Nashville, Tenn., and Summer Whitney Ruple of Mitchell, Ind.; grandchildren, Landon and Logan Ruple, Jaiden, Kyndal and Bentley Ruple, Silas Ruple and Koen, Liam and Gabe Ruple and Madabelle Toliver; and brother, John H. Ruple, Jr. (Dianne) of Johns Island. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a daughter-in-law, Brooke Tomlinson Ruple.

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www.midlandsemmaus.com

January 22 Gathering

Dalzell UMC

3330 Black River Rd

Dalzell, SC

Meal @7 Worship @ 8

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