

2007-2008 Pastor's Report

Year to Date: June 22, 2008-August 31st, 2008

The Griffiths' family moved to Palmyra and David began preaching at Fellowship Bible Church on June 22th. The first sermon was entitled, "God works for those who wait for Him." (Isaiah 64:4) May everything we do be characterized by waiting, prayerfully, for God to work. If He doesn't do it, it doesn't get done.

Then we began a series on what it means to be the Church. In this we talked about Church health and about the Church's mission. Church health means being centered on God, Jesus, the Bible, the Gospel. And these are such integrated aspects of our faith that to be truly centered on any one of them requires us to be centered on the others. The Church's mission, as we're talking about now, is to do Discipleship. The Discipleship process looks like being ReConnected with God, with God's Story, with God's People, with God's Mission, which is to repeat the process with others.

We are thankful for the warm reception we've received here at Fellowship Bible Church. I am excited by the desire I've sensed in many of you to draw closer to the Lord and to participate more in His mission. I believe that there are great things in store for us. Great, that is, as in hard, as well as beautiful and fun.

Practically, we should re-acknowledge the Church process described in Ephesians 4. That is, ministers and elders ("pastor-teachers") exist to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Do not be surprised if more and varied people are given opportunities to lead and teach. I have no interest in centralizing everything on the pastor. Rather, I would like to see us move in the direction of New Testament health, in which every member grows into maturity (Col 1:28), and uses what the Spirit has supplied the Church with through them (Eph 4:16). This means, elders and other gifted leaders teaching and preaching, as well as every person praying and serving according to their recognized gifting.

I look forward to getting to know more of you more closely in the years ahead.

The Year Ahead: September 1st, 2008-August 31st, 2009

What is our way forward together? Here are two areas that I am going to give special attention to for this next year:

1. **Elders:** the Elders need to grow in two ways: as Elders and, specifically, as Shepherds. The Elders all need to strengthen their Elder qualifications and grow in their ability to carry out the unique Elder ministries. Specifically, they need to become the Shepherds they've been called to be. First, this means they have to practice mutual-care, get to know each other, pray for each other, and build each other up. My prayer is that by the end of 2009 we will have a motivated and excited group of Elders who are involved in the lives of people in the congregation with intentional discipleship. The Goal for 2009: **Biblical Eldership.**
2. **Membership:** for too long, too many churches have kept membership roles that don't matter. Membership roles only matter if the people on them are in mutually accountable, covenanted, disciple-making relationships. The first part of turning this around will be to develop a *church covenant* that describes the life of a Jesus' follower as laid out in the New Testament. The second step will be to develop a *helpful process* for *introducing* hopeful members into the roles and for *evaluating* those who want to continue as members. The final step will be to have it *added* to the church constitution. Then we need to use it. The Goal for 2009: **Membership that Matters.**

Beyond this, I'd like to see us adopt a plan for reading the bible and for memorizing scripture together. I'd like to see us institute a few more Gathered Prayer Opportunities, possibly monthly Pray-n-Fasts and also pre-service prayer. I would also like to see us begin to participate more in our communities, using existing events as opportunities to meet unbelievers and also to get to know each other. We live in an exciting place where there is much space for the Gospel to spread, and in an exciting time, when God has clearly brought us together and prepared us to join Him in His mission.

Pastor will be working on schooling throughout the next few years. Far from taking anything away from our partnership for the Gospel here, it should only serve and enhance my equipping ministry here. Please be in prayer for this process and please be patient with any constraints this puts on my schedule.