

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of -August 18, 2019

### THEME: "Times of Fellowship"

#### JOY OF FELLOWSHIP

**Sunday** ..... **Read I John 1:1-7**

*"That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you that you may also have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write unto you that your joy might be full."* The fulness of joy comes by being in fellowship with God and His people. Any earthly joy from things of temporal value falls far short of being in fellowship with God and the people of God who have entered into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. He gives us this instruction in Hebrews 10:25: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* One sure sign of spiritual health is the desire of a believer to be in fellowship with other believers. Not to attend regularly the times of worship and fellowship is a sign of spiritual weakness. When the things of the world seem to be more attractive than the things of God, that should be a warning sign that the individual is missing out what God has for them. Believers in fellowship are enjoying a preview of heaven, where believers will not have the temporal attractions of the world which are fleeting at best. The things that distinguishes the pleasures of this world from the joy of fellowship with God's people is the spiritual presence of our Heavenly Father looking on at His family being together. Yes, He wants His children to be in contact with those in the world, but with the purpose of drawing them in His family as a witness to the saving power of His Son. Evangelism and edification are two important goals for believers. Inviting an unbeliever to a time of Christian fellowship could be a key in reaching them for Christ! It gives them a taste of wholesome joy!

#### HOUSE OF GOD

**Monday** ..... **Read Psalm 122:1-9**

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."* Worship should be a regular part of a believer's schedule. There is no better start to a week than gathering together with people of like faith in the house of God for worship. Honoring God to start a week does great things for a person not to mention what it does for God. Our Savior told us that His Father in heaven is delighted by seeing people come to worship Him. That is the teaching of John 4 It is worthy of note to emphasize that for worship to honor God, it must be in spirit and truth. So important, because it could be that there are places of worship that are not in the Spirit and according to God's truth. The house of worship should be a place where the undiluted Word of God is taught and preached without deviation or compromise. A good works gospel is not the true gospel. Good works must be encouraged as a testimony of faith, not as the source of faith. Good works should be the proof of a person's salvation, not a reason for their profession of salvation. The true believer will have the attitude that the psalmist expressed when he shared his joy of going to be with other believers in the house of God to worship God with a heart of praise and thanksgiving for His love, mercy and grace. What could be better than joining with other believers in taking time to focus totally on God for His gift of eternal life and spiritual light as we travel in this dark world!

#### CORPORATE PRAYER

**Tuesday** ..... **Read Mark 11:15-17**

*"My house shall be called a house of prayer."* One of the great privileges of being in the family of God is the privilege of prayer, calling on our Father in heaven at any time of day or night. We are encouraged to do that in I Thessalonians 5:17 where we are told to *"Pray without ceasing."* Whereas prayer should be a part of our personal lives, God is also highly honored by His family getting together for corporate prayer, arguably the most important meeting of the body of Christ in a local church. What could possibly be more valuable than joining together at God's throne of grace. The truth is that the Christian church had its beginning with prayer meeting, the one in Jerusalem described in Acts 1:13-15 just before the Day of Pentecost. We read this about their gathering just after the return of Christ to heaven: *"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount of Olives...And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication."* There other instances of corporate prayer in the book of Acts, such as the one which describes the reaction of fellow believers to unjust imprisonment of Peter. We read this in Acts 12:12 describing what Peter did as a result of God's Divine intervention of his behalf by having him be freed from that incarceration: *"And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of*

*John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.*" How about God including that corporate prayer meeting in His Holy word. Does that not tell us something about the importance of prayer meetings?

## EDIFICATION

**Wednesday ..... Read Ephesians 4:13-16**

*"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* There is a clear cut and oft repeated instruction to believers to build each other up as well as the warning not to tear each other down. By the same token, the devil tries hard to disrupt the unity and harmony by creating issues to divide. The adversary knows that it will be difficult to entice most believers to do things that are obviously wrong, so he resorts to coming up with arguably good things where there are understandable differences of opinion where people may take sides. It is then that the commitment to unity and harmony is really tested. If believers are really devoted to building each other up, they will commit themselves to be good listeners to the viewpoints of others, and be willing to arrive at solutions that seem to be agreeable with a sense of the leading of the Spirit in moving ahead. The Bible makes it clear that believers who are spiritually mature will be interested in quietly correcting fellow believers who have been at fault rather than making things a public issue. That command is clearly stated in Galatians 6:1: *"If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness."* Only the adversary would want wrongdoing to become a widespread issue. How delightful it is to the heart of God to see an offender gain a great victory by having a fellow believer help him to get things straightened out!

## SEPARATION

**Thursday ..... Read II Corinthians 6:14-18**

*"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."* Although God wants His people in the world to be His light, He gives this clear instruction to be separate from the world: separate from worldly ways that cater to the lusts of the flesh. When a person is born of the spirit, he or she does not have to look to worldly things to satisfy their spiritual needs, unlike the believer who has a dead spirit. Unbelievers do have a craving for God, but they don't understand that those needs can be satisfied only by entering into a personal relationship with Jesus to have their dead spirit with which they were born regenerated, brought back to life. As a result they look to worldly ways instead of the ways of God. Believers have the same physical and emotional needs as unbelievers, and can satisfy those needs without making idols of worldly things or people, as do unbelievers. With the spiritual strength that is lacking in their unsaved friends, they separate themselves from the unbeliever when the unbeliever resorts to things that would offend their Lord. By being separate from worldly ways of spiritual darkness, they are being the light of the world as our Lord commands us to be. This may have a tendency to win a soul to Christ.

## COMMUNICATION

**Friday ..... Read Malachi 3:16-18**

*"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him that feared the Lord."* It is so important for believers to communicate with fellow believers as part of God's family. Such communication builds strong relationships that honor our Father in heaven. Just as an earthly father enjoys seeing his family enjoy each other, even so does our Heavenly Father enjoy watching His family get along and build each other up! This passage from Malachi gives an interesting thing about the interactions of God's family: there is a family album. Just as earthly families take pictures that help them to recall and to share the good times, so God's family will have these books of remembrance of the good times. I have to think that God, just as we do here on earth, likes to have others share the good times His people have had. Yes, there are books in heaven, not the least of which is the Lamb's book of life, the registry of God's family that is mentioned by the Savior Himself in Luke 10:20 and by the apostle John in Revelation 13:8. Another form of communication mentioned in the Bible is letter writing. Think about it: twenty one letters were used by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, plus the seven in the beginning of the book of Revelation. I believe God is honored by our staying in touch with letters and cards, text messages, and E-Mails.

## VISITATION

**Saturday ..... Read Matthew 25:34-40**

*"I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."* In this passage in Scriptures, Jesus points out that those who engage in the visitation ministry during their earthly lives will be rewarded at the final judgment. He indicates that our visits to those who may be sick and to those who, for whatever reason, have been incarcerated in prison count as if we visited Jesus Himself. That ought to encourage all of us to step it up a notch in making visits a priority. Teaching and preaching are vital in the work of the Church on earth. The music ministry is wonderfully used by the Holy Spirit to help us in our worship. But our Lord wants us to know that He places a high priority on some of the less public acts of love for Him and others. The beauty of the visitation ministry is that it really does not take any specialized talents. All a person must know is how to say "Hi, how are you doing? Those visits earn rewards!