

IN THE SERVICES

January 6, 2008

Lord's Supper—

- L1Officiate: Jody Bennett
- L2Helper: Troy Trahan
- L3am(only): Darwin Hodge
- L4am(only): Milton Chance
- R1Assistant: Mark Martin
- R2am(only): Randy Kimler
- R3am(only): Homer Ballard
- R4am(only): Andrew Kimler

Morning Prayers—

- Opening: Greg Hamby
- Closing: Alex Wells

Evening Prayers—

- Opening: David Garrett
- Closing: Steve Ary

January 13, 2008

Lord's Supper—

- L1Officiate: Andrew Smith
- L2Helper: Garry Hamby
- L3am(only): David Landrum
- L4am(only): Polo Gonzalez
- R1Assistant: Wallace Robin
- R2am(only): Spencer Scogin
- R3am(only): Paul Smith
- R4am(only): Eastwood Almazan

Morning Prayers—

- Opening: Andy Crandall
- Closing: Ricky Scogin

Evening Prayers—

- Opening: Jathen Garrett
- Closing: Charlie Carr

FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

- Announcements** — Buddy Hamby
- Greeters** — Andrew Smith, Chris Robin, Ross Holt, Jeff Baker, Kenneth Barry
- Lockup** — Jarren Garrett/Garry Hamby Alex Wells/Doyle Osborne

EVANGELIST

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 Websites: www.stonegatechurch.com
 www.obeyhiscommands.com
 www.stonegatestandard.com
 www.bloggingthebible.com

ELDERS

- Blake Bergman
- Jerry Covington
- Andy Crandall
- H. G. "Buddy" Hamby
- Sam Holt
- Randy Robin

DEACONS

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Jeff Baker | Jimmy Moss |
| Ken Barry | Doyle Osborne |
| Jeff DeLord | Stephen Savant |
| Jarren Garrett | Ricky Scogin |
| Jathen Garrett | Andrew Smith |
| Keith Gremillion | Jim Threadgill |
| Garry Hamby | Tony Vela |
| Greg Hamby | Edgar Wolf |

TIMES OF SERVICES

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Sunday Family Bible Study | 9:00 a.m. |
| Sunday Morning Worship | 10:00 a.m. |
| Sunday Evening Worship | 6:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday Family Bible Study | 7:00 p.m. |



The Stonegate Standard

"Lift up a standard for the people..." (Isaiah 62:10)

3948 Highway 365 • Port Arthur, TX 77642 • (409) 727-1568

Volume XV

January 6, 2008

Issue 1

Fellowship With God

"Fellowship" (*koinonia*) means sharing, and Moulton and Milligan say it was used by the Greeks for "the closest of all human relationships." When God is the "partner" it consists of our sharing His characteristics—as Thayer puts it, "partakers in common of the same mind..." The ideal will only be realized when we dwell with God in eternity, but it sets standards by which our present relations are measured—with God, and with man.

God says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). God is love, and therefore we must also love (1 John 4:7-11,19). We must "walk in the light" to have fellowship with Him who is Light (1 John 1:5-7). God is Spirit, and our worship must be a communion in spirit (John 4:23-24). Finally, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

The *means* of such a relationship is Jesus Christ. He died for us, that a just God might forgive our sins (Romans 3:23-26); and in His role of Prophet, Jesus delivered the message by which we are informed of God's will and are finally judged (Hebrews 1:1f; John 12:48-50). His declarations,

commands and invitations are to "all the world," but *acceptance* and *appropriation* of redemption is on an individual basis, and fellowship with God is contingent upon our living, obedient faith. John wrote, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us," i.e., "with the Father, and with His Son ..." (1 John 1:3).

In a practical sense, man's fellowship with God is possible only as man is taught, hears, learns and comes to Him (John 6:45). Faith is the result of an objective approach to revelation (Romans 10:17), and must not be equated with mystical "feelings" or emotional "inner warmth." And *this* is the place for the "relative knowledge" argument. The "grace-fellowship" fellows, who are uncertain about fellowship among men because doctrinal knowledge differs with our background, etc., must acknowledge the same relativity *here*, where fellowship with God is at stake. Pursuing their present course, some will eventually accept the evangelical conclusion that God directly and immediately operates upon a sinner's heart. "Proof" of fellowship with God will be "heart-felt" in the best mourner's bench tradition.

Of course, man's knowledge is less than perfect, but the sincere truth-seeker has reason to be

—continued from the front—

a way suited to man's capacity (Ephesians. 3:2-6; 5:17); and (2) God knows our thoughts (Hebrews 4:12), our inner spirit from whence we serve Him (Romans 1:9; 2:29). Since fellowship between God and man is on an unequal basis by its very nature, man's part is at best his sincere endeavor to be God-like. In fact, "godliness" is more a "Godward attitude" that motivates our doings. If I fail to have fellowship with God, it is my fault, not His.

Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" "If a man love me, he will keep my words..." (John 7:17, 14:23). Do we really believe these words?

Its Effect on Man's Relations

When does one become a Christian? When one conforms to the requirements that Christ has given (John 14:21-24).

Who determines this conformity? God judges His servants, in keeping with declared standards (John 12:47f). Individuals must answer to God (Romans 14:21).

When may I recognize another as a Christian? When, by my understanding of God's word, I see one has done the bidding of Christ (Matthew 7:15-23).

Is not my most honest appraisal related to my understanding of truth? Certainly! Truth is not "relative." God knows exactly when one is His, but I "know" in keeping with my grasp of revealed truth (Acts 18:24-26).

Could I be honestly mistaken, my understanding of truth at fault? Yes! I do not consider my level of understanding to be equivalent to the divine standard (2 Corinthians 10:12f).

Then how can I justify being positive about anything? God requires honest conviction of me. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5, 22-23). "As it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe,

and therefore speak" (2 Corinthians 4:13). To the extent I believe God's word is truth (John 17:17) and am honest in my study and conclusions; exactly to that extent I must conclude that contrary teachings are erroneous (2 Timothy 4:1f).

Is not this sectarianism? No, it is not! Sectarianism chooses certain doctrines and builds a "party" with them as boundary—refusing to consider anything else as "truth." I refuse to consider my level of understanding as final, contending only that I must teach and act in keeping with an honest, objective consideration of God's standard and in order to be true to myself and to God. The "flip-side" of sectarianism, and equally bad, is the irreverent and faithless conception that each man is accountable only to himself, so that there is no standard of absolute truth.

Fellowship (sharing) must be upon the above basis. We must "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." "If there be therefore any ... fellowship of the spirit..." it must be found in this striving, objectively, to be pleasing in God's sight (Philippians 1:27f). The universal test for determining man's spirit is, therefore, his reaction to examination of his practice and teaching in the light of the revelation of God's spirit. (1 John 4:6—where "we" and "us" are John and other inspired witnesses—1:1-4—not "the party.")

Financing, promoting, or encouraging error obviously contradicts proper concepts of fellowship with God (2 John 9:11; 2 Corinthians 6:14f). One may say he so acts in keeping with his objective Bible study and honest convictions. God knows the truth about that and will judge accordingly. This does not, however, release me from my obligations to act upon my conviction. If we are both honest, we will study together; and neither will conclude that union which embraces error can take the place of unity in the Lord.

—Ed Harrell

Family Talk

We extend a sincere welcome to all of our visitors. It is an honor to have you with us today and you are welcome every time our doors are open. Please stay a few minutes after worship so that we can get to know you.

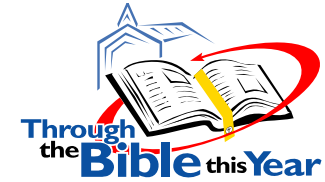
About Our Sick—Louise Sanders remained as of Friday morning, at St. Mary's, Room 5064. Please continue to remember her in your prayers. **Rex Phillips'** last radiation treatment is scheduled for this Wednesday. Please pray that this will be all he needs. **Tammy Holt** begins another round of chemo Tuesday.

Men's Planning Session—All the men of the congregation are encouraged to attend January 12th at Nederland City Hall, 1400 Boston Avenue, 9:00—11:30 a.m.

Congregational Meeting—Evening Service on January 13th.

Friday Night Bible Study—next Friday night (January 11th) at the **Hopkins**.

7th-12 Grade Devotional—Sunday evening, January 13th at **Jarren and Jill Garrett's** home.



The **2008 Five Day Bible Reading Schedule** is available on the desk in the Foyer. Be sure to pick one up!

Teacher's Meeting: 4th Grade and Down—All those interested in our teaching program for the younger classes (whether teaching, assisting, or helping behind the scenes) are asked to meet this evening with **Sam Holt**, 5 pm, Room 14.

Want to Become More Involved? Check out all the Sign Up Sheets!

In The Library:

Sunday Night Devotionals

5th & 6th Grade

7th—12th Grade

College

Friday Night Bible Studies

Preparing the Lord's Supper

On the Desk in the Foyer:

Wednesday Night Invitations

Congregational Activities

Teaching Bible Classes, 4th Grade & Down