

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER



A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30a.m.
Worship.....10:30a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00p.m.

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Randy Judd.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald.....Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

"Why Don't We Cancel Church Services?"

By Brian R. Kenyon

Certainly, the biggest single sporting event in terms of viewers, money spent on advertising, and recent American tradition is the Super Bowl. Two of the best teams in the NFL meet to decide the champion. The argument could be made that this is our nation's biggest unofficial holiday ... so why don't we just cancel church services on this Sunday night? Think about it! This year Christmas will fall on a Sunday. This writer is always astonished at the churches of Christ who cancel, in part or all together, church services on Christmas Day. How many churches of Christ, who are reputed to be "sound," will do it this year? If it is good to cancel services on Christmas Day, then why not for Super Bowl Sunday?

"It's Important for Families To Spend Time Together"

The number one reason why some churches of Christ (along with denominations) cancel services on Christmas Day is so their members can "spend time with their families." Is spending time with family important? Absolutely! Training children involves spending time with them (Deut. 6:4-7; Pr. 22:6; Eph. 6:4). Some households are more football fans than Christmas fans. Why could they not argue, "Since Super Bowl Sunday is a great opportunity to spend time with family, we should cancel services"? After all, a good football game provides opportunity to teach young ones about perseverance, teamwork, and sacrifice. What's the difference between Christmas and Super Bowl Sunday? It's only a matter of personal preference! However, should spending time with family come before serving the Lord? Absolutely not! Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt. 10:37). What would our neighbors think when they know we usually go to church services on Sunday, but now we are staying home because it's Christmas Day or the Super Bowl? Will they understand that God is first in our lives? More importantly, what does God think? Sometimes we buy into the false denominational concept that "Christmas" is an important religious day, as if God elevated that day above all others. The leadership in those churches of Christ who cancel services on Christmas Day would probably (and rightly so) scoff at the idea of canceling services for Super Bowl Sunday, but again, what is the difference between Christmas and Super Bowl Sunday to God? Skipping services on either day for "the sake of family" places family above God!

“We Won’t Have Many in Attendance”

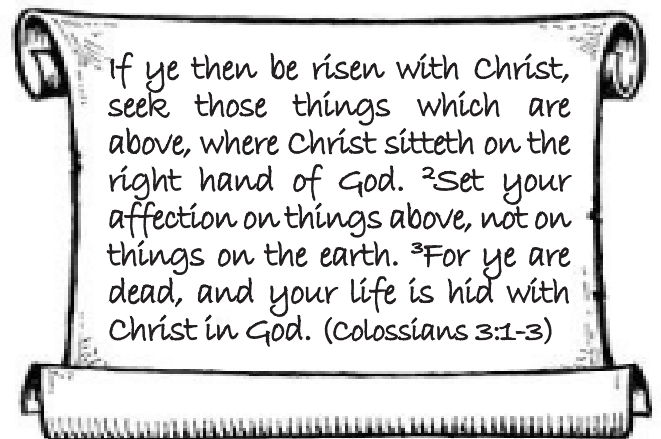
Another reason why churches of Christ (along with denominations) cancel services on Christmas Day is because they are afraid that many members would not attend anyway. This was explicitly stated in a 2005 local newspaper article concerning denominational churches in our area. In fact, one denominational church said it did not want to “force” its members into having to make a decision between family or God! By cancelling services, this denomination made the choice for them, and family won! How sad! While this writer is not aware of the leadership in churches of Christ making such a statement, he cannot help but to think that this very reason crosses the minds of some. Well, how about Super Bowl Sunday? Suppose the home team made the Super Bowl? Could not the leadership reason, “We won’t have many in attendance because they’ll all be watching the game, so we might as well cancel services”? How ridiculous! Again, what’s the difference between Christmas Day and Super Bowl Sunday? It should not matter how many people may or may not attend church services if attending church services is the right thing to do! Moses said, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:2). People need to quit viewing church services as social functions. If the “in crowd” is not going to be there, then we might as well call it off. God is to be the focal point of worship (Jn. 4:23-24), and God’s word is to be emphasized in Bible classes (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The secular world’s agenda should not dictate the procedure for God’s faithful people (1 Jn. 2:15-17)!

“The Times We Meet for Church Services Are Matters of Judgment Anyway”

A seemingly “respectable” excuse for canceling services on Christmas Day would go something like this, “Since the times we meet for services fall under the category of judgment, we have a right to change the times of services.” While it is true, for example, that God has not said what time on Sunday we are to partake of the Lords’ Supper nor whether or not we must meet twice on Sunday, we must honestly consider the reasons why we would change and/or cancel times of services on certain days and the implications of doing such. First, in this case, the basic reason why can be summarized as caring for the activities this world more than for the activities of God. It is not inherently wrong to adjust or even cancel the times of services. During the hurricane season of 2004, at least two of those storms made landfall in our area on a Sunday. Some services were canceled, and for good reason (cf. Mt. 4:7). Those were physical life and death circumstances that were beyond human control. Canceling services on Christmas Day or on Super Bowl Sunday, however, is a different circumstance. That circumstance is self-serving and worldly, the opposite of what Christianity is all about (Mt. 6:33; Col. 3:1). Second, the implications of canceling services to fulfill fleshly desires negatively impacts our relationship with God and one another. The impact on our relationship with God is obvious: we are putting Him on the back burner. Concerning each other, what about people whose only family is the church? Are not they being denied spiritual family time? Third, what message are we sending to our neighbors when church services are cancelled for events such as Christmas Day or Super Bowl Sunday? How can we be “the salt of the earth” when we are flavored with worldliness or be “a city set on a hill” when our people are influenced by the power of darkness? Members of the church are to influence the world for good, not reinforce separation from the Lord. If it’s okay to cancel services on Christmas Day, then why not for the Super Bowl, a family reunion, or even a good day of fishing? What’s the difference?

Conclusion

There is nothing inherently sinful about watching football. However, when it or any other recreational event takes precedence over God, something is wrong. There is just as much reason for canceling services on Christmas Day as there is on Super Bowl Sunday. If not, why not? Instead of putting cultural days above the Lord’s Day, let us “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mt. 22:37)! We send a powerful message by worshiping God as we normally do. Why jeopardize that for the Super Bowl or Christmas Day?



SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Betty Thornhill was taken thru emergency to L.R.M.C. Monday evening. We will keep you updated on her situation. Bob McAnally is home from the hospital and doing some better. Grace McAnally is recovering well after knee surgery. She will be at Oakbridge Health Center for re-hab for the next few weeks. Sharon Washington will be having up-coming surgery. Ginny Hamby's chemo got held back last week due to her blood count being too low. She is going to try again this Wednesday. Jacquelin Dopwell has an appointment on Feb. 16th to find out if she is to go through lung surgery. Also keep Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Billy Moore, Debbi Kirkland, (Brenda Mask's sister in law), Warren Lane (friend of Darnell Kirkland), Jeanette Whitehall, (Linda Pennington's aunt) and Alyssa Buckner (friend of the Coopers).

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Bill Burton, Claud Romine, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Duane Nelson, Betty Thornhill and Sharon Edler.

Others: Chrissi Fuesner and Sandy Given. Please pray for all of these.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 7th: Our Monthly Fellowship In-Service after evening services. Please bring finger foods.

Feb. 14th-17th: Gospel Meeting at the Sebring Parkway Church of Christ. See the flyer on the bulletin board for more details.

Feb. 14th: Baby Shower for C.J. and Kelcey Grimes after the evening services. They are registered at Buy Buy Baby & Target. Instead of a card please bring a children's book with a message to baby Grimes inside. For any questions see Jessica Anderson or Heather Burns and to donate to a money tree see Rene Bingle.

Feb. 20th: Men's breakfast here at South Florida Ave. at 8:00 a.m.

Responses

Ken Taylor placed membership with us last Sunday evening. Please let us welcome him into our family.

Visitors

Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Scarbrough, Robert & Joy McGuire, Shelby Costin, Stephanie and Clark Kenyon, Christy Wright, Ted & Debra Okolichany, Olivia Davis, Kaylee and Sophia Barfield and Rebecca Hill.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

February

Bobby Sheumaker **Table** John McShane
Phil Fife..... **Assist** Kyle Williams

Sunday, February 7, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Tucker Sweeney
Prayer..... Jimmy Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Charles Paulin
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Jeff Bingle
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters..... The Sweeneys
Att. Cards..... Paul & Ian
Closing Prayer David Anderson
Open & Close Building..... Bobby Sheumaker

Wed. February 10, 2016

Song Leader Kyle Bingle
Opening Prayer Charles Paulin
Closing Prayer Kenny French

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call **Chuck Wyatt** so he can get a replacement - 859-5231*

Sunday, February 14, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Stacey Paulin
Prayer..... Bobby Sheumaker

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Josh Estridge
Sermon..... Bob McAnally
Closing Prayer David Deal

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Brian Kenyon
Greeters David & Tonya Anderson
Att. Cards..... Ian & Sebastian
Closing Prayer Steve Hunley
Open & Close Building..... Bobby Sheumaker

Wed. February 17, 2016

Song Leader Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Closing Prayer John McShane

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Jan. 10.....	\$4,735.00
Jan. 17.....	\$4,910.30
Jan. 24.....	\$4,418.50
Jan. 31.....	\$5,386.00
Contribution Average	\$4,810.96
2015 Weekly Budget	\$4,422.60

THE DANGERS OF ILLICIT SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS PART I

My heart was recently broken when I learned of a young Christian getting his girlfriend pregnant. It reinforced the need to write such an article as this. Too many young people, even in the churches of Christ, are altering their lives and placing their eternal souls in danger over premarital sex. Sex is good, created by God, but only for those who are Scripturally married (Gen. 2:24; 1 Cor. 7:3-5). Young people must be taught God's will for sexual relationships. Proverbs 5:1-6 depicts a father's warning to his son about the deadly seduction of an illicit sexual relationship. This warning begins with an exhortation to be discrete. "My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding, That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge" (Proverbs 5:1-2). Wisdom goes on to warn against the attractiveness of a woman with seductive intentions. Although the text describes a woman and the potential for a man to lust after her, the principles also apply the other way around: a woman lustfully attracted to a man's attempt to seduce her. The wise man continues, "**For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil**; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell" (Proverbs 5:3-6). Although the flattering words of the opposite sex, a woman in this case, are sweet and smooth, her end is bitter, tumultuous, and destructive. Implied is that anyone who succumbs to her will suffer the same bitter ruin. This "immoral woman" stands on shaky ground, so shaky that she herself does not even know the instability of her own life. She is going "down to death" to "lay hold of hell." Don't go with her (or in principle, young ladies, with him)! ❤️ Brian



South Florida Avenue
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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, FEB. 7 All youth group members (and any adults who want) will take the Bible Bowl test. We will Meet in the fellowship room at 3:30.

Sunday, FEB. 21 We will have a L2L scrapbook planning meeting. Young people not involved with the scrapbook should still come. It will be a good time for boys song leading and/or speech practice, We will meet in the fellowship room at 4:00 p.m.



Remember What Jesus Did For Us!

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

—Romans 5:8



The Forrest Park church of Christ in Valdosta will host YES Weekend on Feb. 26-28, See Brian if you want to go so logistics can be worked out.

Let us continue to pray for our young people as they prepare for the Lads to Leaders convention in Orlando. What they are doing is not easy but rewarding!



Our young people and their chaperones are gearing up for a mission trip to Nicaragua June 25 thru July 3. If you want to make a special contribution to this work, please see the elders.