



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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SUNDAY SERVICES

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

WEDNESDAY

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

WEB PAGE

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Joey Treat Pacific Islands
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Cultivating Congregational Communication

Rick Kenyon

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* provides three definitions for “communication”—“[1] an act or instance of transmitting; [2] information transmitted or conveyed; [3] a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.” In short, communication is the way we interact with one another. It could be talking, pointing, or simply making faces, but however we do it, there is a message behind every effort. Typically, our words serve as a primary source of communication. However, interaction can also be expressed through written language and body language and any media that utilizes sight and/or sound (e.g., texting, messaging, memes, reels, videos, etc). In fact, the words we speak only comprise a small percentage of communication. We know the adages: a picture is worth a thousand words; and “It’s not what you said, but how you said it.” Despite *what* we’re trying to say, communication is loaded with nuances. When speaking, we must take into account the volume, tone, speed, clarity, and, of course, the words themselves. Physically, our posture, facial features, and hand animation, etc. can inhibit or enhance what we are wanting to say. The ability to communicate effectively should be a skill to attain. It promises unified and strong relationships, while the lack of effective communication inevitably leads to diminished and broken relationships. Fortunately, we serve a God who has demonstrated and directed the kind of communication He expects among His people. Consider a few observations.

God is the author of (good/effective) communication.

Since the beginning God has always communicated with mankind with flawless and irrefutable perfection. Hebrews 1:1 teaches that God’s earliest forms of communication were directly to the “fathers” (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and “prophets” (Moses, Elijah, Jonah, etc), while His final form of communication came through His Son, Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, God chose to preserve in writing “all that Jesus began to do and teach” (Lk.1:1, NKJV), and through the Acts and various letters, God’s complete revelation is more than sufficient (2 Tim. 3:15-17). There is no one more perfect or perfectly suited on equipping mankind on how to communicate with one another. The more we study and learn about how God communicated His word to us, the more we will learn and understand how to effectively communicate ourselves to one another and to a world in need of hope and salvation.

It is impossible to not communicate. The Bible is abundantly clear that God wants all people to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-6; 2 Pt. 3:9), but those who “do not know God” and “do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess. 1:8) will suffer God’s vengeance. This means that by our attitudes and actions, we are communicating to God a message of love and obedience or a message of disrespect and disobedience—the same is true of the Lord’s church. By our actions and attitudes (whether intentional or unintentional) we are always

communicating something to one another. For example, love is easily seen and communicated when we fellowship, serve, and work alongside one another. However, love is hidden (potentially non-existent) when we say and do nothing with our church family. If God's people wish to communicate in a godly way, we must be aware that every word is important (Mt. 12:37) and every action will be accounted for (2 Cor. 5:10). Likewise, every unspoken word and undone action has a felt impact on those around us.

We must communicate with God to effectively with one another. The church is the body and Jesus is its head (Col. 1:18). Effective communication with each other requires effective communication with God. Thus, each member should engage in a godly, Christ-like life: a continual and focused prayer life (Phil. 4: 6; 1 Thess. 5:17); living as a daily sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2); relentlessly working with diligence to serve God (1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 3:23; and loving sincerely and full-heartedly (Eph. 4:1-3; 5:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:22). If our actions and attitude communicate to God that our relationship to Him is the most important thing in our lives, then fruit of our faith will blend with our brothers and sisters. The body of Christ will grow when our love and dedication to God is seen and shared with each other. Without God, effective communication is not possible.

Communication is a process. Romans 12:5 states: “so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” Every part of the body is important, even when it comes to specifics of communication. For example, sign language utilizes the hands and eyes whereas talking utilizes the mouth and ears. Even though the message may be exactly the same, the mechanics of how that information is transmitted is vastly different. Though each part is different in its ability and skill, the parts form a symbiotic relationship to bring about a unified result and here are some phases to consider no matter how we communicate.

PHASE 1: Preparing for Communication. In preparing for effective communication, we must first rid ourselves of pride (Prov. 29:23; 1 Jn. 2:16). Pride is the greatest barrier to communication among the Lord's body, and as long as it remains, it will impede effective communication as “noise” within our midst. Noise is anything that disrupts or muddles communication. This might be the busyness of life, recurring frustrations, unhealthy patterns of behavior, or any form of constant negativity — and this noise might be self-initiated or from others. Making efforts to reduce and eliminate noise prepares us for clear communication. Likewise, we must adopt the mentality of “You first.” So often words fall on deaf ears or are misinterpreted simply because we want to be heard first: “let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas. 1:19). Seeking to understand before being understood cultivates an environment for effective communication.

PHASE 2: Expressing Communication. Expressing communication is simple when we know what we want to say and to whom we are saying it. Our primary method of communication is through language. It may be spoken, written, or acted out (body language). Intentional and premeditated communication is straightforward and the preferred method. Each of us must “speak truth with his neighbor” (Eph. 4:25), and ensure that we are “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). Conversely, unintentional communication creates misunderstanding. It may be harmless that a simple modifier may clarify (e.g., “I'm not meaning [insert misunderstanding], but I do mean [qualify initial message]”). Sadly, it may be harmful or insidious when we ascribe malignant intent or fail to see the best in people or situations. Prayerfully consider how and what we want to say to one another.

PHASE 3: Maintaining Communication. Communication grows more meaningful and effective when a consistent flow of information is traded. As we seek to cultivate congregational communication, consistent contact with each other is essential. Just as cogs of a watch require measured and timely contact to move the hands, so each member must seek to execute measured and timely contact. Whether that be in our attendance to public church assemblies (Heb. 10:24-25) or in a pointed effort to encourage an individual or family, consistency will ensure we are “redeeming the time” (Col. 4:5). While contact with one another “causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16), the outpouring of our love and devotion to God ignites our pursuit of evangelism that will empower our ability to connect our relationship with people to our relationship with God. Studying together and studying with others about the gospel ensures communication stays fruitful and consistent.

PHASE 4: Maximizing Communication. Maximizing Communication. In this final phase of cultivating congregational communication, we want to ensure that we know the body—the whole body. Since every Christian is a part of the body, we have a privilege and obligation to know the body's (*continued on page 3*)

PRAYER LIST

Current Brenda Mask is now home from the hospital **Continual:** Brenda Mask (blood pressure issues); Debbie Bush (struggles); Brian Smith (heart health); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Geny Johnson (health); Bill & Carlene Long (strength); Ron & Judy Ford (health); Bobby Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Charles Paulin (health); Jim Turner (health). Margaret Coone (health) Kathy Nester(health); David Anderson (hand surgery)

Shut-ins: Joyce Burbage, Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French **Extended family and Friends:** prayer requests are emailed each week.

Please help us keep these lists updated by informing the office of known changes in status.

Evangelism Seminar-March 23-24 @FSOP
Training the Saved to Teach the Lost
Rob Whitacre - Speaker
Classes are from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm- All are welcome!

Ladies Days in our area:
 April 1- Kissimmee church of Christ
 April 15- Eagle Lake church of Christ
 April 15- Beville Road church of Christ
 Please let the office know if you are interested in going to these so we can RSVP as soon as possible. These events are great opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth!

Gospel Meeting
 Eagle Lake Church of Christ
 Speaker: Eddie Gilpin
 April 16-19, 2023
 Sun. 9:30, 10:30 and 1:30
 Mon-Wed 7:00 pm

Gospel Meeting
 Central Church of Christ
 Clearwater, FL
 Theme: Reigniting the Fire
 Speaker: Allen Webster
 (author and editor of House to House Publication)
 April 2-6, 2023
 Sun. Friends and Family Day

(continued from page 2) members. Every member is important and has a responsibility to communicate that message to one another. Close friends in the church is a blessing, but those friendships should never communicate feelings of exclusion among others. We can maintain close relationships without others being excluded. Additionally, we must diligently continue in prayer for ourselves and each other. Pray that God will continue to increase our communication no matter how bumpy, rocky or awkward it seems to start. Along with that prayer, each member has a privilege and responsibility to encourage and uplift one another so that the Lord's body may grow. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34-35). - Rick Kenyon

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

March

Designated Elder - Brian Kenyon

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Announcements.....S. Paulin
 Song Leader/prayer.....Brian Kenyon
 Devo.... Victor Eskew
 PrayerSteve Tydings

Sunday, March 19, 2023

10:30 A.M.

Compassion Driven Christianity(Ps 103:8-13)
 Rick Kenyon

6:00 P.M.

"Ghosting God"- Kyle Faneuf

Those to Serve

10:30 A.M.

Song/Prayer before class....Tucker Sweeney
 Song Leader (both services).....Dave Williams
 Announcements.....Jimmy Sweeney
 Scripture reading/Prayer.....Paul Sweeney
 Lord'sTable (both).....George Davis
 Closing Prayer.....Phil Fife
 Open/Close bldg (both).....Jason Hendix
 Greeters Shearers
 Attendance cards (both)Caelen/Camron
 Sound Booth (both).....Kyle Bingle

6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song LeaderDave Williams
 Scripture reading/PrayerJarred Spivey
 Closing PrayerTucker Sweeney
 Greeters PM.....Brunsons

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Announcements.....T. Anderson
 Song Leader/prayer.....Frank Hamby
 Devo.....Deacon
 PrayerRick Kenyon

Upcoming Events 2023

March

- 21- FSOP Ladies Class
- 23-24- Evangelism Seminar at FSOP
- 26- Fellowship in Service

April

- 1- Egg Hunt
- 1- Ladies Day Kissimmee church of Christ
- 2-6 Gospel Meeting Central Cof C, Clearwater
- 7-9 Lads to Leaders Convention
- 11 FSOP Ladies class w/Susan Stearsman

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Feb. 26.....	\$5,148.00
Mar. 05.....	\$9,697.00
Mar. 12.....	\$5,214.00
Contribution Average.....	\$7,296.97
Weekly budget	\$7,410.00

Lessons from I Timothy (Pt. 3)*Saving the World Through Prayer*

God desires all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). And, there is one way to be right in God's eyes and that is through Jesus Christ who gave Himself as a ransom for all (I Tim. 2:5). God has partnered with humans--men and women, boys and girls to help that good news reach everyone. Saving the world is a large task. Where should we begin? I seem so small when compared with 8 billion people. Paul said to begin in prayer. "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (I Tim. 2:1,2). God's people are connected to the most powerful and caring Being that exists in the world. His ears and His heart are opened toward His people and their prayers. Supplications are requests. Similar to how we will often ask our parents for the things we desire; we ask God for the things we need. If God desires the whole world to be saved, we should ask for help in sharing the gospel with others. Prayers are talking with God. We connect with people through talking. We talk about the things that happen in our day with our friends and family; we also can share the things that happen in our day with God. Giving thanks is exactly what it says. We must always be aware of where the good things in our lives come from--that is God, and thank Him for it. The song says we must count our blessings! Like Paul, I challenge you as young men and women of God, make your request known to God, talk with Him, and be thankful. Start with prayer.- V.D.

I Need Thee

Most kids when they get hurt, are lost, or scared, will start crying, "I want my mommy!" or "I want my daddy!" They run to the outstretched arms of their parent for comfort and reassurance. They calmed down once they feel everything will be okay. As a parent you try to be there whenever your child needs you.

When the toils and burdens of life weigh us down, do we say—"I want my Father!"? Do we think about going to God with our problems and concerns?

When the Lord needed reassurance and comfort, he went to his Father. (Luke 22:41-44) We should follow Jesus' example and turn to our Father when we are in need. ("I need thee, oh I need thee; every hour I need thee; oh, bless me now, my Saviour! I come to Thee.") We need to run to the outstretched arms of our Heavenly Father for comfort and reassurance of His love, care, and protection. Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Also read Psalm 18:1-2,31-32; Psalm 27:14; Philippians 4:13.

Polishing**The Pulpit****August 16-24, 2023**

Some have expressed interest in chipping-in with other SFA members to rent a cottage in the area and attend. If you are interested, please let the office know by [April 1](#).

FSOP Ladies Class

March 21, 2023 @ 7:00 pm

"BEWARE"

Taught by Susan Stearsman

Matthew 7:15-28

Join us in person at FSOP or on Facebook @FSOP Ladies Class

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.comEmail us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.

**South Florida Avenue
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Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.