

Shield of Faith Fellowship of Churches

International Newsletter September 2021

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Apostles' doctrine..." (Acts 2:42). By this statement Luke points to the importance of adhering to the foundational teachings of the apostles of Jesus Christ without compromise or embellishment. Despite being forewarned, over time the Church has heedlessly wandered away from the Apostles' Doctrine in several critically important areas! Yet God has graciously brought us to this definitive time of restoration so that His ultimate purposes can be accomplished through the Church. Because of these things, the Church must live in humble and continual repentance, recognizing that God desires to progressively reveal to us those areas in which we have come short of His will and glory. And the Church today must resolve to *return to a firm biblical-basis* in all areas of both lifestyle and doctrine if she is to see the glory of God fully manifested.

It is *time* and *past time* for us to return, for the hour is late and the harvest is ripe! There must be within us a sense of urgency, a refusal to react defensively like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time, men who chose to love and preserve the empty traditions of men more than the eternal authority of the Word of God.

A Prescription for Change

This book is written to identify specific areas of doctrine in which the church needs correction and restoration. For most of the 20th century God has been aggressively bringing change to the Church in areas of worship, spiritual gifts, church structure, principles of faith and more. Now, at this hour the momentum of restoration shifts to an even more critical area – the correction of baptismal practices in the Church, with special focus on correcting the many abuses of baptismal practice that have emerged through the specific influence of Roman Catholicism. We will boldly make specific recommendations for change based on the firm authority of God's word and on the basis of apostolic precedent. As you prayerfully read these pages you will be convicted by the Holy Spirit and challenged to take steps of restoration and correction so that the full glory of God may be manifested in your life and ministry. I pray that each reader will humble his heart and obediently move with the cloud of God's glory into the fullness of His will for your life and ministry.

You are Invited to the below opportunity to help bless your ministry. Simply follow the instructions. These seminar's will be virtual online only.

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DIVIDE COVID-19 AND THE CHURCH

By David A. Zimmermann

For church leaders everywhere, the last few months have been filled with a never-ending barrage of complex challenges, which have come about due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps the most recent challenge will turn out to be the most complex yet: How to resume in-person worship. As decisions are made on the size of gatherings, how to keep people physically distanced, face masks or no face masks, to sing or not, and what to do with children, the decisions that will need to be made are a breeding ground of potential conflict and division. This potential is brought about by a freedom that is held dear by every US citizen, the freedom to think and make decisions that make sense for us. So the question results, "How can we nurture this freedom and at the same maintain the unity that a healthy nation requires?" I remember back to Mr. Lemke's ninth-grade government class when he posed the question, "Are we free to say anything and do anything we want to in the United States?" I believe the answer we eventually came up with was something like, "As long as my freedom doesn't interfere with your freedom or violate any laws." So in this COVID-dominated state of affairs the question results, "How can the church nurture freedom of thought yet still maintain the unity that Jesus wants for His body?" The answer is found in Romans 14:13 "So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall." I believe that Jesus followers are called to an even higher standard of freedom. We are called to the freedom of self-sacrifice... the freedom to put someone else's needs above our own. We are called to the freedom of humility... the freedom to admit that we don't have all the answers and we're just trying to do the best we can. Finally, we are called to the freedom of patience... the freedom to quit being grumpy with each other as we figure out what our new normal will be. How about this for an idea? How about the church be the church? How about the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, show the world how to embrace differences of opinion yet move forward in unity? How about we ask God to use us to show the world that we don't have to be polarized? How about we, as the body of Christ, don't pass judgment on those who are questioning restrictions right now? How about we also don't poke fun at those who want this reopening to go slowly and proceed with carefully thought out plans? How about the church be the church and put the love of Jesus on display for all the world to see? I'll close with Jesus' words from John 13: "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." Let's get busy proving to the world that we are Jesus' church.

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NOVEMBER 12-13
SHIELD OF FAITH FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES INT'L



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7 Ways to Stay Close to the Lord in College

By Cally Logan



The journey of entering college is an exhilarating time, whether it is your freshman year or you are returning for the next semester. So many things change rapidly, and there are so many options for spending your time and what to give your attention to. Many students struggle to know how they as Christians, can stay close to the Lord in college.

1. Morning and Night Routine

Each of us has a rhythm of getting ready for bed and preparing for our day the next morning. Both hold a sacred and special personal time that provides the perfect opportunity for quiet time with the Lord. Typically waking up in the morning or preparing for bed are times when our hearts and minds are shifting focus and becoming ready for what is next. When we give our attention to the Lord during these times, we invite Him into life's rhythm. Whether it is time spent reading a small section of the Bible, or time spent in contemplative [prayer](#), there is that connection with the [Holy Spirit](#) that we are entering into. It is there that we can ignore the distractions around us and give God our full attention, if even for a few minutes. It can drastically change how we approach the rest of our day or how we sleep at night when we spend time with God. Making quiet time a part of daily practices will make it a good habit to live by and grow your relationship with God in the process.

2. Small Groups

Community is a great gift in life, and how the Lord designed His Church to be. Doing life with one another can bless and benefit your walk with the Lord when you make a choice to live life with those who have also chosen to follow Christ as their personal Savior. This can look like the Small Group in a church, a Bible study on campus, or even finding Christ followers and making an effort to participate in events, activities, or the regular flow of life among them. As iron sharpens iron, so will those who love the Lord around you as you all navigate life together. It can also challenge you to seek God together in life, not strive in your own abilities. It is not good for man to be alone; we need one another to thrive, and finding a committed Small Group or community serves your walk with the Lord in more ways than one.

3. Church

Finding a good home church near campus is very important. Not just for Sunday services but for engaging in life among other Christians. Small Groups, community, and biblically-based wisdom can be gained through finding a solid church. It is crucial in the effort to stay near to God in college that you find a church based on truth. When you find a church that honors God and seeks to teach truth, you can know that you are being fed substance, not fluff. Consider visiting churches in the area, and don't be afraid to ask questions while there. Ask God to help lead you to where you can be fed and serve His Kingdom through fellowship with others. There is never a replacement for a well-rooted church, and when entering into college, it can serve as a true haven for the heart.

4. Stay in Touch with Mentors

Many college students are leaving Youth Groups or Small Groups in their hometowns to venture into their next chapter. As a High School Girl's Small Group Leader, I can say firsthand that mentors and youth leaders still care deeply about their growing youth. Staying in touch and connecting can provide support from a known advisor and heart, making a world of difference as so much new is taking place. Sending a text message with prayer requests or connecting at a scheduled time for a Facetime or phone call can bring some of the foundational time you have built with the Christian community back around as so much has changed. Those who have spent time investing in you still care, even after you have graduated.

5. Personal Bible Study

Staying close to the Lord daily also looks like spending time in His Word. The Bible is the Word of the Lord for us to enjoy not just on occasion but as a daily meal. Through His Word, we can find answers, wisdom, and encouragement for many things that life will bring about. It is also a place where you can connect with the Lord in an intimate and holy fashion. Consider reading a chapter of a book a day or dwelling richly upon a few verses to soak in. Wherever God leads you, let the Word be something you read daily and give your full undistracted attention to. Come to know Him by His Word and let it marinate within your heart in truth.

6. Listing Prayers Weekly

Another way to stay close to the Lord is through writing down weekly prayers. Perhaps journaling or even having a dry erase board in your room can assist in making this a practice that you take part in on a weekly or even daily basis. Write the prayers, questions, and praises that you have on the board and place a check or circle them each time you lift one up to the Lord. As you do this, you will begin to see how prayer makes a powerful difference in your life, and it will deepen your communication with the Lord as well. Do not forget to praise Him when the prayers are answered, not only once but often. God wants to be an active presence in our lives, but we must create space and quiet ourselves so we can hear Him. Make a choice for the investment of time in prayer and see how He truly does answer.

7. Monthly Words

Typically, towards the beginning of the year, people tend to latch or seek out a specific word or phrase from the Lord to set the year's stage, pace, or theme. That practice does not need to be limited to once a year; rather, it can be far more often than that. Many times, if we ask, He will graciously give us a word for the season or even month to carry us in rhythm for that time ahead. It could be a phrase, a memory verse, or a word to stand on with Him in prayer, belief, or study. Ask Him to allow you to see what that word looks like in daily application through Bible study, what actions you should take for that month in accordance with that word, and how that word can serve as a testimony that you can share

with others going forward. Even write them down later to see what themes He was building for that year and what He had for you as a gift during that time.

Staying close to the Lord as college starts can be a challenge as so many things fight for your focus, but it is possible. Ask the Lord what is His heart for you so that you may stay near to Him and not wander. Be open that in this new season, He may have even more opportunities and places where you can come to know His heart more richly. God has a good plan for your life, one for hope, a future, and for more than you could even imagine. Trust His hand in your life and honor Him in the big and the small. You will never regret the time you spend on your relationship with God; in fact, it will bless the entirety of your life.

