

THE NEW CHURCH

Message from Bruce Van Blair

TIME WITH THE SPIRIT

A FEW MINUTES OF SILENT REFLECTION DURING OUR WORSHIP SERVICE

TWO VOWS TO MAKE WITH THE SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE – TWO THINGS TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE NEXT SUNDAY:

I) ONE PROMISE TO KEEP

A call; a visit; a thing you have needed to take care of; plan a surprise for a loved one; a closet to clean; something you have been needing to do for yourself.

II) ONE THING TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD

Something to jettison. You have heard of “letting go”?
One thing to remove from your life that is holding you down or holding you back.
Break a date; resign from an obligation; stop trying to help some person or situation.
(The person or the situation may be very worthy, but the Spirit is helping you to see that it is not your assignment.)

DON'T FORGET TO THANK THE SPIRIT, AND REJOICE!

If it doesn't come clear, don't force it. Otherwise we will be getting into a lot of foolishness ... or worse. Maybe it will be clear by next week.

Please have a piece of paper or a notebook and a pen or pencil handy when you come to our Worship Service. When you have written your vows on the piece of paper, keep it under the candle where you have your morning devotions. Do not throw this paper away until you have fulfilled the vows, and never add to or change what you have written. You may, however, exchange this paper for updated guidance you have received from the Spirit in any subsequent Sunday service.

Peace to you,

Bruce Van Blair

(the next page includes follow-up comments from BVB)

THE NEW CHURCH

Message from Bruce Van Blair

FURTHER THOUGHTS FROM BVB ON TIME WITH THE SPIRIT

I am very pleased about the addition of TIME WITH THE SPIRIT to our Worship Service. So are many of you, from the comments you have been making. Let me see if I can make a few comments of my own without messing it up.

First of all, I trust that this “prayer time” will develop for each of us as we go. We will not always use this time in exactly the same way or with the same results. That’s good. That can keep it a time for the Spirit, not for our contrivances.

Second, I have a few “suggestions”:

- 1) Be serious about bringing paper and a pen or pencil to the Worship Service. Better yet, get a little journal just for this purpose – that is, for recording the vows you make each week during our TIME WITH THE SPIRIT.
- 2) Some of you might be tempted to get undisciplined about this discipline. You may soon realize that two vows per week are not enough. Sometimes each vow, either of a promise to keep or a thing to jettison, only reminds you of a dozen more that need attention. But slowing down and getting patient and earnest and deeply prayerful – that’s the idea!

I assume all of us need to accomplish more than one thing each week, and doubtless we need to abandon some of our efforts each week. But we also take most of these things casually (for want of a better word). If I do not meet some of my goals – well, okay, I keep trying; no big deal. If I decide not to take on a responsibility but then, face-to-face with a friend, I weaken and take it on anyway – well, such is life.

But hopefully these two vows TO GOD, in the middle of a Worship Service, will never get casual. We will use these two vows each week to train us for a deeper obedience and prayerfulness in all that we do. So there will be two! And there will never be more than two (on this level).

- 3) In time, some of us will find ourselves getting ready for the two vows we know we will want to make come Sunday. Excellent! Among other things, we may notice the byplay of promises competing with each other, and some of them not making the cut. We may also notice that just thinking about them is not the same thing as getting the Spirit’s direction and permission. But we know that when Sunday comes, we will lock-in to the two vows, for better or for worse, and then learn from what happens.