

## Being Strong

*“Never give in...never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force...never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.”*

- Winston Churchill -

*“You become a worrier by practicing worry. You can become free of worry by practicing the opposite and stronger habit of faith. With all the strength and perseverance you can command, start practicing faith.”* - Norman Vincent Peale -

*“Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this, that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak.”*

- Thomas Carlyle -

## August Birthdays

6 GiGi Zamarripa	16 Nick Hoffman	26 Al Pena
4 Noah Perales	19 Keith Lovelady	31 Aubrey Pena
12 Debbie Hoffman	25 Pat Limburg	

(Note: if anyone is “missed” here, let Jim know)

### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

**Preacher:**  
(Vacant)

### **Church of Christ**

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# Indio Informer

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Be encouraged..

## What Does the Church Have to Offer Me?

By Allen Webster

It is universally recognized that the people in our lives have a tremendous influence upon how we live—either for good or bad (cf. Proverbs 27:17). Wisdom therefore suggests that we bring into our daily concourse those who will better us. We all need the encouragement and accountability that comes from being with other people who have a strong desire to live right.

One way to do this on a consistent basis is to join with other faithful worshippers each Lord’s day. While the focus of worship is honoring Jehovah, it is interesting to observe that God designed His worship so that it also benefits worshippers.

Hearing sermons helps one develop into a mature Christian (Hebrews 5:12–14). The Word is able to build us up (Acts 20:32). The early church continually devoted themselves to two things: discipleship and fellowship—education and edification. God’s church today is the only institution on earth that is serious about disseminating the knowledge of God and His plan for saving man.

- The song service teaches and admonishes (Colossians 3:16).
- The communion provides an emotional and intellectual attachment to the sacrificing God and His appreciating people (1 Corinthians 11:23–28).
- Altruistic giving helps us overcome selfishness and gives us a good feeling in helping others and a cause bigger than ourselves (1 Corinthians 16:1–2).
- Praying for others and being prayed for is a deep and abiding connection (Acts 2:42).

Such fellowship is vital to our spiritual life. Andrew Carnegie said, “It marks a big step in a man’s development when he comes to realize that other men can be called on to help him do a better job than he can do alone.”

**Fellowship implies encouragement.** Most of us respond positively to encouragement. Some time ago in South Windsor, Connecticut, police officers began pulling drivers over in large numbers. One person stopped was Lori Carlson. As the officer approached she asked what she had done wrong. To her amazement the officer handed her a “thank-you ticket” and said, “You’re driving great! We appreciate it!” City authorities had started a program to give safe drivers a two-dollar reward ticket for observing the speed limit, wearing safety belts, using turn signals, and having their children in safety seats.

You may not receive a “thank-you ticket” when you arrive at church services, but you will receive a smile, a warm welcome, and the opportunity to be a part of a community of people who are busily and happily making a difference in this world.

Church is the one place where love is always the focus. Jesus said it would be so: “*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*” (John 13:34–35). It is the abiding essential in every generation, in every culture. Both Old and New Testaments emphasize it. “*Encourage him*” (Deuteronomy 1:38; cf. 3:28). “*Exhort one another*” (Hebrews 3:13). We are to “*provoke one another unto love and to good works*” (Hebrews 10:24; Philippians 2:2).

After all the dust settled and the church was fully built and functioning, Paul noted, “*now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity*” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

**Fellowship implies participation.** The church is not just a club that hangs out together. In the biblical sense, fellowship is more than a potluck meal. It means “to have in common; to share; to participate for a common cause.” Thayer defines fellowship as

“association, community, joint participation” (p. 352). There is a purpose for fellowship. Observe how the prefix “fellow-” is used:

- Citizens (Ephesians 2:19).
- Heirs (Ephesians 3:6).
- Helpers (2 Corinthians 8:23; 3 John 1:8).
- Laborers (1 Thessalonians 3:2; Philippians 4:3; Philemon 1:1, 24).
- Servants (Colossians 1:7; 4:7).
- Prisoners (Colossians 4:10; Romans 16:7).
- Workers (Colossians 4:11).
- Soldiers (Philippians 2:25; Philemon 2).

As members of the same body, we work together in different functions to accomplish a common purpose (Romans 12:4–5). We share fellowship “*in the gospel*” (1 Corinthians 9:23; Philippians 1:5; 4:3). We are “*called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*” (1 Corinthians 1:9) and share a fellowship with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). We are seeking to build each other up (Romans 14:19).

**Fellowship implies cooperation.** Fellowship is more than being together or enjoying a meal together. Church is more than a crowd showing up at the same time. Even though we may worship in a large congregation, this differs from being in a large crowd at a ball game, movie, or Disney World. Charles E. Jefferson wrote, “A sharp distinction ought to be made between a church and an audience. An audience is a group of unrelated people drawn together by a short-lived attraction. An audience is a crowd. A church is a family. An audience is a gathering. A church is a fellowship.”

The church is a family. The word “fellowship” (*koinonia*) in Acts 2:42 could even be translated “family.” The words “*brother*” and “*brethren*” are found 353 times in the New Testament (more than once per chapter on average). Truly, as we sometimes sing, “We are part of the family that’s been born again . . .” This brotherhood (cf. 1 Peter 2:17) stems from the fact that we have the same Father (1 John 1:3). As we walk in the light “*we have fellowship one with another*” (1 John 1:7).

**What a fellowship! What a joy divine!**