

## Calendar

Singing today for Belle, Wanda, Champ, Vee and others —  
1:30 to 2:30. See Grant Mulligan or Dave Hamilton.

### “Love one another...”

*“By this all people will know that you are my disciples,  
if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).*

Our love for each other is the primary “brand” of a disciple of Christ. There are other ways we show our discipleship: abiding in Christ’s words (John 8:31) and bearing fruit (John 15:8). But the John 13 text is the only one that specifically says, “all people will know that you are my disciples...” followed by a characteristic. That characteristic is love; primarily, it is love for “one another.”

“One another” defines the priority of our love. Yes, Jesus tells us to love even our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us (Mt. 5:48). Fulfilling that command will also speak volumes to the world about our love for God. But we have a primary obligation to those who share a relationship in Christ.

Paul says to “outdo one another in showing honor” (Rm. 12:10) and to “count others more significant than yourselves” (Phil. 2:3). In Gal. 6:10, he tells us to do good to everyone “and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

We know that churches in one area sent to the aid of churches in another area (e.g., the churches of Macedonia sent aid to Jerusalem during a time of famine — Acts 11:27-30).

There is another passage that factors in to this. Speaking of widows, Paul says in I Tim. 5 that the first line of help is the family — specifically, the children of the widow. It seems logical that the principle stated here would apply to all relationships. In fact, common sense would tell us what Paul says: “let them first learn to show godliness to their own household...” (I Tim. 5:4). And it’s serious, because one who doesn’t take care of his own is “worse than an unbeliever” (I Tim. 5:8).

Some of our members have several family members in the church. It makes no sense to cook and clean for a family that has family members nearby, if it means neglecting the needs of those who do not (I’m not aware of that happening here).

What we can glean from all of this is that we are to take care of needs as the needs arise, first for our own family, then among our brethren in the local church, then among our brethren wherever they may be.

### The church of Christ

meeting at 900 E. Natoma  
PO Box 492  
Folsom, CA 95630  
916/608-4866

#### Elders

Forrest Brown: 530/295-9230  
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#### Deacons

Brent Agee: 916/786-0436  
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John Daniels: 916/985-3090  
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Steve Dickey: 916/983-1071  
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#### Evangelist/Editor

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#### Service Times

Sunday Morning Assembly  
9:30 AM

Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM

Wednesday Bible Study  
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

Private classes arranged at your convenience.

www.folsomchurch.com  
Webmaster: Richard Harvey

After we address those needs, then we are free to spread our charity to all people, even those who are not disciples of Christ. However, the needs among members near and far is chronic and sometimes acute. We can grow weary in the good-doing department (Gal. 6:9), but we are commanded to seize every opportunity (Gal. 6:10).

### Application

Let's make some application of these principles. First, in the use of money from the church treasury, we are bound by the examples we find in Scripture. Those examples teach us the following:

1. When it comes to benevolence, money from the treasury is to be used to help only those who are Christians, whether at home or abroad. There is no example of church treasury money ever being used to relieve the needs of non-Christians.
2. Church treasury money is not to be used to relieve needs when there are Christian family members in the church (I Tim. 5:8, 16).
3. We should have a "pebble in the stream" vision of priorities. First, we should take care of our families (I Tim. 5:8); next, we should help our own members in the local congregation who are in need. Then, we should look outside and do what we can to help Christians who are suffering in other areas of the world. After that, we should do what we can to help "everyone" (Gal. 6:10).

### Opportunities

We have a lot of opportunities to help others here at the Folsom Point church of Christ. First and foremost, there are many to pray for — and for many, that is all we can do for them (but that's a lot!). We cannot pass the CAT scan for them; we cannot wave a magic wand and dissipate their grief; we cannot give their loved ones back to them. But we can pray fervently for them and "the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16b). Most of our local members have no real financial needs nor do they need physical help, since they have family nearby. But they earnestly desire our prayers, and we can all pray.

For those who have real financial needs — not incurred due indebtedness for unnecessary expenditures — but have no family who can help,

both the church and individuals can and should come to their aid. This is a proper use of the church treasury.

We are also authorized to help brethren in foreign countries who are suffering. Again, both church money (Acts 11) and individual money (Mt. 25:31-46) may be used to address these needs.

The church here sends checks periodically to men we can trust who are charged with finding food and shelter for our brethren in need in other countries. The elders will continue to take this responsibility seriously and are very pleased that the church here has responded by meeting the contribution goals we have established over the years.

There are many ways to help individually as well. Since funds collected by these entities go directly to brethren who have needs, I feel they are a better choice for charitable giving than organizations like UNICEF or the United Way.

Ken Marrs directs the "Titus Fund" which permits you to make a donation for needs in the Philippines. See Ken for more information.

Another worthy cause is the **Sacred Selections Foundation** operated by David and Dana Carrozza to give financial aid to Christian who would like to adopt children. As you know, adoption is extremely expensive, so help from the foundation may be the only hope for some potential parents.

Contributing food and other items for the brethren in **Zimbabwe** continues as well; see Christie Posey.

And, if you receive the **Brethren Online** (BOL) e-mails, you will be aware of many needs of other brethren in many places.

One final note, a caution. There is a tendency to exalt "our" cause over all others and that can lead to unrighteous judgment (John 7:24). Let's not judge others for what we think they may or may not be doing. We have no idea what needs others are addressing in their own way and with their own funds. We'd probably be surprised. Let's do our own work, leaving the judgment to God.

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