

Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church

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www.macedoniapbc.org

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A Good New Years Resolution

By: Elder Will Martin

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world. James 1:27

In January of 2009, I sent out the first newsletter to the saints at Macedonia. That newsletter contained an article written by Elder Michael Gowens concerning the importance of family worship in the home. If you need to refresh your memory or read the article for the first time, the newsletter can be found here: <http://www.macedoniapbc.org/Newsletters/1st%20Quarter,%202009.pdf>. I am thankful that many who read the article were moved to make it a priority to perform worship within their homes this past year. The results of the efforts that many put forward were immediately apparent to me. It is my hope that as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, that we will add another duty to our New Years Resolutions this year as well.

The fast paced society that we live in today makes it hard to “visit” like folks used to. I have heard the stories from some of my family members of how they used to sit on the front porch for hours and discuss church, politics and other topics. We certainly don’t hear of that taking place very much now. Most people have email, facebook accounts and blog pages that allow us to keep in touch with people. While I am not a fan of returning to the “good old days” in most ways (i.e. I like indoor plumbing, central heat/ air and computers), I wish we would do as folks used to do and take a little more time for those who are in need.

James lists two groups in the above verse of scripture that are in need (afflicted), the fatherless and the widows. Those without their father or their husband are absent a very significant figure in their lives. A man is to provide for the needs of his children and family (I Timothy 5:8), and when he is absent, those needs could be neglected. Children who are absent a father are also without the counsel of a person who they could have gone to for advice. Those of us who regularly use fatherly counsel can attest to the void that would be present should we be without that figure in our life. A husband is to love his wife (Eph 5:25, 28 and Col 3:19), and a woman without her husband needs to be shown that she is loved and that people care for her. These types of carnal and spiritual needs are tough to be conveyed across a computer screen (not to mention the fact that a lot of the elderly widows are without computers for communication). Sometimes it takes spending time with someone in order to truly understand what they are in need of.

Zechariah speaks of the duty of caring for those in need in the following verses.

And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Zech 7:8-11

The list of those who we should be mindful of is extended in the verses above. Not only are the widows and fatherless listed, but the stranger (Hebrews 13:2) and the poor (James 2:1-9) are added to the list. Zechariah follows up the command to take care of those in need with the result of neglecting those duties. While we should be motivated by love to serve our Lord in these capacities, we should never forget the consequences of turning our back on the Lord’s commandments.

Yea, they made their hearts [as] an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Zech 7:12

One of the most common misunderstandings surrounding the duty of visitation is the thought that the pastor is the only one who should be doing the duty. While it is a duty of the pastor to perform visitation to those who are in need (James 5:15), there is no place in scripture that should lead us to believe that he is the **only** one who should be doing it. A church or family could be greatly served by others visiting the homes of those in need and spending time with them. May the Lord bless each of us to do a better job in the coming year, and years to come, of taking care of those who are in need.

Macedonia Church Announcements:

1. Macedonia Church lost one of our most precious members in early November. Sister Vercil Parker passed away on Friday November 6th and was laid to rest on Monday November 9th. We continue to pray for her family in this time of loss.
 2. There are several websites of interest available for those of you interested in writings on several subjects. Two examples are:
 - <http://littlezionpbc.org/Materials/materials.php>
 - <http://www.sovgrace.net/>The writings on these two sites are edited by Elders Joe Holder and Michael Gowens, respectively. These are two good sites with writings that could be a great benefit to all in their studies. I will try to periodically inform you of other sites that may be of assistance to you.
 3. We will have a clean up day at the church on Saturday, January 9th.
 4. Elder Michael Gowens is coming to preach for us during our February bi-annual meeting. Lord willing, we will meet on Friday night, February 12th and Saturday night, February 13th. Singing will start at 7:00 both evenings. Brother Michael has agreed to stay through Sunday morning with us as well.
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Announcements from Sister Churches:

1. Harmony Primitive Baptist Church in Calhoun will host a meeting on Saturday, January 16th. Elders Roger Campbell, Jim Campbell, Daniel Wood and Lic Josh Winslett will be with them. Services will start at 10:00, followed by lunch and afternoon services. There will be supper at 6:00 and services following at 7:00.
2. Shoal Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Canton, GA will host the North Georgia Fellowship Meeting on January 22nd and 23rd. Services will begin at 10:00 on Friday morning the 22nd and continue all day Friday and through Saturday afternoon, the 23rd.