



August 30th, 2007

Honor the Sabbath and Keep it Holy

One of the things that I liked the least during my middle and high school years was my father's tennis tournament rule. Sunday morning worship trumped tennis always and without exception. I played in not a few junior tennis tournaments which fell on weekends. The first round would begin Saturday morning, and I would begin advancing through a draw. If I had not been eliminated by the end of Saturday, I would be scheduled to play a Sunday morning match. Each time I had to try and talk the tournament director into letting my match start after I attended Sunday morning church. If he or she would not delay the start of my Sunday morning match, I had to default. I never was able to talk a tournament director into delaying my Sunday morning match so I could go to church. I defaulted Sunday morning matches not a few times. My dad's rule meant I would never win a tennis tournament. I didn't like it back then.

Fast forward 20 years. This past Saturday and Sunday I was scheduled to play in a tennis tournament with my doubles partner. The Lord was gracious enough to let us advance in the tournament on Saturday, and guess what? We found ourselves scheduled to play the next round on Sunday morning during church. I wanted to play so badly. We had a great shot at making it to the finals and possibly winning the tournament. We certainly liked our chances. My partner spent over an hour trying to convince the tournament director and our opponents to delay our match until after church, but to no avail. We had to forfeit the match.

I didn't forfeit because I'm a pastor. NEHBC's trustees give me a set number of Sundays I can take off each year. I could have taken the Sunday off to play the tournament. The reason I didn't play is because even if I had decided to take the Sunday off, I wouldn't miss corporate worship to play sports. Some may consider that legalistic; after all, where does the Bible say one can never miss a Sunday of church to play sports? But, it isn't for legalistic reasons that I never miss corporate worship on Sunday mornings unless I am very, very sick. Here is why corporate worship is my Sunday morning priority every week: a large component of corporate "worship" is me and my siblings in the faith bringing pleasure to the Lord Jesus by doing what we can to discover and then fulfill His desires. Together, we discover His desires through the preaching of God's Word. I am at church on Sundays so I can worship the Lord, not so that the Lord can worship me. I go to Sunday morning worship to meet the Lord's desires and not for Him to meet mine. So, if I miss worship to play tennis, I have chosen to meet my desires over the desires of my Lord. Even when Nicole and I are traveling on a Sunday morning, it is our commitment to pull into a town at about 10:45am and find a Baptist church and attend a worship service. (Almost every Baptist church has a service that begins at or around 11am on Sunday mornings.) I want to encourage you to make Sunday morning corporate worship your Sunday morning priority. If we exist to bring pleasure to God, then missing worship to pursue a personal interest is unthinkable.

A word About The Word

This past Sunday I preached 1 Corinthians 12:1-7 on the topic of spiritual gifts. For the next couple of Sundays we will be talking about spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:1 says the Holy Spirit does not want the believer to be ignorant about the subject of spiritual gifts. I want to encourage you to make an effort to be in worship this coming Sunday as we continue our study of spiritual gifts. I hope to see you Sunday.

Both sermons are available on cd for purchase at the sermon booth in the church lobby. You can also find them in MP3 format on our church website [here](#) or via podcast at www.itunes.com. Simply search for "Nathan Lino" in the search box of the iTunes store.

Visitor Follow Up

Have you ever wondered what happens to the white visitor card once it gets filled out by a guest and dropped in the green offering bag? Here is what happens. The ushers separate the pink envelopes and cash from the white guest cards. The white guest cards are compiled and taken to my office. On Sunday afternoon around 5:00pm I go to my office at the church, pick up the guest cards, and start making phone calls. I personally call each of the family units and thank them for visiting our church and ask them if they have any questions about our church or any prayer requests that we can pray for. If they give me any prayer requests, I pray with them over the phone then and there. On Monday morning, my assistant makes copies of the guest cards which get distributed in staff meeting. On Monday night, Pastor Sonny personally calls all the visitors that filled out a guest card. If the guest card indicates a child in 5th grade or below or a teenager, April or Wes will call the family at some point in the week to talk about children's ministry or youth ministry respectively. On Tuesday or Wednesday, the adult Bible Study teachers are emailed the names of visitors who fit their class' season of life. The teacher then makes a phone call to the family unit inviting them to their Bible Study class. During the next Sunday evening visitation, the family that filled out the white card will get an in-home visit from one of our teams; after all, they came and visited us, so the least we can do is go and visit them.

Our follow-up process is both extensive and effective. When a visitor drops a guest card in the offering bag, they will get anywhere from 3-4 phone calls that first week and then an in-home visit. I would like to ask you to remember to pray for the follow-up phone calls and in-home visits. Pray that there would be good conversation over the phone. Pray that we would be able to assist people who are trying to find a church home. Pray that we would be sensitive and caring to those who are hurting.

Praying for a Pastor

This past Tuesday morning found me in the home of Pastor and Mrs. Jim Kirkland. Allow me to share a small piece of their story with you. Jim Kirkland is 74 years old. The Lord called him to preach when Pastor Kirkland was in his early 20s. He spent the next 52 years preaching the Word of God in the American Baptist Association churches that the Lord called him to pastor. Upon their retirement from full-time church work, Pastor and Mrs. Kirkland moved to our neck of the woods because two of their four daughters and most importantly, several of their grandchildren, live close by. They told me that as a long-time pastor and wife, they knew they wouldn't be happy at just any church, so they decided to find

the church where they would join and then based on the location of the church purchase their retirement home. They told me they visited NEHBC one Sunday and knew that we would be their church home. They told their realtor they wanted to live within close proximity to NEHBC. So, they purchased their home just two miles away. They have been coming to NEHBC now for a few months. I truly enjoyed visiting with them in their home this week and learning more about them. I was truly blessed by their gracious hospitality.

This past April, Pastor Kirkland had an accident in which he suffered significant head trauma. He lost part of his memory. He spent the months of May and June in regular rehab and made significant progress. Then, last month while on his way to Bible Study on a Sunday morning at our church, Pastor Kirkland fainted. You may have seen the ambulance come and pick him up from church. That situation undid all of the progress he made in rehab during May and June.

Please be in prayer for Pastor and Mrs. Kirkland. Please pray that the Lord would restore his mind. They have so much biblical wisdom and guidance to pour into the lives of their children and grandchildren. So much wisdom and experience when it comes to church life. Would you please pray for the Lord's healing upon the life of this long-time pastor. May the Lord give Pastor Kirkland the desire of his heart.

Staff Stuff

This month marks five years that my assistant, Brenda Heinrich, has been on my team and four years for Pastor Sonny, our Associate Pastor. When you consider that our church is about to click past the five-year mark, you realize they have been serving at NEHBC for a long time.

Brenda has been such a blessing to me. Her integrity and work ethic are unsurpassed. She is a wonderful wife and a fantastic mother to her son and daughter-in-law. She truly loves the Word of God and is not only a serious student of the Bible but a gifted teacher as well. Her ability to provide biblical counsel to life's struggles is biblical wisdom on display. She is a tremendous source of support and strength for me. Please pray that the Lord would give her wisdom and strength to carry out all of her responsibilities.

Pastor Sonny was the second employee I hired. When he first came on board, the scope of his job was so broad it was impossible to sum up what he did at NEHBC. As our staff has grown, his job has become more focused around his giftedness and strengths. Pastor Sonny is an excellent counselor and a strategic thinker. He has much discernment when it comes to people and their agendas. He is also an excellent preacher. He takes so much off my plate to enable me to focus on the biblical role of a pastor. I couldn't do what I do if Pastor Sonny was not doing what he does. Please pray for Pastor Sonny as he plays such a crucial role at NEHBC.

Field Update

Well, you would have to have extremely poor eyesight not to realize the field is not yet a putting green, but rather a sand trap. At this point, I'm not sure if the deluge of rain that fell for four days following the seeding washed away some of the seed. I'm sure it had some impact. However, when one walks across the dirt, there is now a sheen of green sprouting above the dirt in most places. Enough for us to decide to hold off on re-seeding for right now and give it another week or two to see what kind of progress the grass will make.

In the meantime, it is obvious that the field will not be ready for our September 16th five year

anniversary picnic after the Sunday morning services. However, we are still going to have the event. We are simply going to change the setting from a grassy field picnic to a tailgate party. Keep your plans to bring your lawn chairs and umbrellas to shield yourself from the sun. NEHBC will still be providing food and lots of it. We'll also be providing water and iced tea as well as the plates, napkins, and silverware. If you want to bring your own ice box with different drinks, then go for it. You'll be able to circle up with other families and enjoy the fun together. We will still baptize that afternoon at the beginning of the tailgate party.

Door Hangers

Last night we had the in-gathering of the door hanger prayer requests. Thank you so much to those of you who were faithful to distribute your door hangers. Thank you for influencing your community for Jesus Christ. At the in-gathering we enjoyed delicious ice cream and toppings, and we all had a blast.

I want to remind you that it isn't too late to distribute a stack of door hangers. In fact, more door hangers will be available this coming Sunday morning. Feel free to take a stack and distribute them. A few days later, go back and collect any door hangers that were re-hung by your neighbors with prayer requests on them. Then simply drop them off at the church the next time you come. Thank you for your desire to invite people to church and for believing in prayer.