

## Devotions for May 2-8, 2011

### **Monday, May 2, 2011: Church Daily reading: Ephesians 5:23-30**

In the past, many saw the church as a positive, welcoming place. Today, most people are apathetic or hostile toward the church. We need to become a church that young adults seek, but struggle to find, in the world today. They want to belong to something that is making an impact, changing the world. They are deeply spiritual but turned off by an institution that's inwardly focused, more interested in arguing about who is in and who is outside of God's love than engaging in the world to make a difference. If the church is going to connect with a new generation, we are going to have to change. Our mission never changes, but how we accomplish that mission must. What are you hoping for in your church? Ask God to move in you to help make your church the place and people it needs to be.

### **Tuesday, May 3, 2011: Bible Daily reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

We believe that the living God speaks to us out of the written witness of God's people. We want more people to get the Bible into their hands, open it regularly, and let it get into their lives. When we gather around the Bible we grow as disciples: our soul is fed, our minds are shaped and renewed, and our hands are strengthened for ministry. Here are two and a half things people might think about the Bible: 1. It's really, really important. 2. We don't read it enough. ½. We aren't comfortable reading it literally, but we aren't sure how to read it otherwise ... so we don't read it at all. How much time do you spend in the Scriptures? Ask God to reveal more and more about the character, nature and purpose of the Scriptures to you.

### **Wednesday, May 4, 2011: Questions Daily reading: John 3:1-8**

Some churches believe it's important to have all the answers, and others are comfortable living the questions. We want to be a faith community that is so anchored and secure in the love of God for all people that we can afford to welcome questions and embrace skeptics and seekers. We want to be a community that refuses to offer easy answers, stays in active dialogue rather than divisive diatribes, and seeks deeper understanding as God's Spirit enlightens us. We don't want to be a community, whose doctrines are like bricks in an immovable wall, keeping some people in and other people out. We want to be open to the movement of the living Spirit of God, where all people are welcome to be part of the conversation. What questions do you have? Ask God for the insight and wisdom that could only come from the Spirit of God at work in your life.

### **Thursday, May 5, 2011: Ministry Daily reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

The picture at the center of the church's future is ministry. The Greek word translated ministry is "diakonia," which literally means "to serve the needs of others." Being a disciple of Jesus means serving the needs of others and being the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. We're called to be disciples, to serve the needs of others, to make a difference. The younger generations, generally turned off by the institutional church, are hungry to align with a community that serves the needs of others and makes a difference in this world. See the connection? That is the sweet spot of our future. Where do you, or could you, engage with ministry? Ask God to direct you to the kind of ministry that will make a real difference in this world.

### **Friday, May 6, 2011: Service Daily reading: Romans 12:9-13**

We've all heard teachers express concern about children coming to school without everything they need to thrive. While schools are being called to higher standards, the economy is forcing them to do much more with much less. These children are the future of our nation. Is God calling us to step into that gap? Could you adopt the school in your neighborhood as a service opportunity? Pray for the children and their families, and the staff. Tutor, read to children, monitor the lunch room, or be another loving pair of hands in a classroom. With God's help, we can positively impact a school and the lives of those children forever. This also gives us an opportunity to meet, and fall in love with, the remarkable diversity in our community. If you've ever complained about "kids these days," this is your chance to make a difference. What school is near you? Ask God to guide you into deeper service in your local school.

### **Saturday, May 7, 2011: Respond Daily reading: Hebrews 13:1-3**

**Pray.** Pray for our future, for those God is calling us to reach. Pray that God will reveal how you are being called to be a vital, active part of the puzzle. **Worship.** Make weekly worship a priority. This is the center of our life together; the center of the life of discipleship. **Connect.** Small groups are the primary growth environment at Prince of Peace. If you're not in a group, join one. Nothing will help you grow in faith and friendship more than a healthy small group. **Serve.** Find a need and fill it. Connect your passions, gifts and experience with God's call. No matter how much or little time you have, find a place to serve. You will never be more like Jesus than when you're serving. **Give.** If you are a regular, generous giver, thank you. If everyone gave even \$10 a week through automatic giving, the difference in your life and our life together would be extraordinary. How can you respond to help the future of the church be brighter? Ask God to show you how you can respond.

### **Sunday, May 8, 2011: Fear Daily reading: John 20:19-31**

John tells us how the early disciples respond to Jesus' death and resurrection. Their world has been turned upside down, and now they are living in fear, cowering behind locked doors. But Jesus appears to them, speaks peace into their fears, blesses them with the Holy Spirit, and sends them out to be a blessing to the world. And they go. They go out and share the good news of God's unconditional love with their words and actions. It would have been easy to continue living in fear. But we have been given a blessing, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to do the work of God in the world. What are you afraid of? Ask God to take away your fear and live in renewed confidence in the promises of God.