
Co-Community Spiritual Director's Thoughts

THE FINAL THIRD

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge GOD, and GOD will make your paths straight. - Proverbs 3:5-6

For many of us, the words of Proverbs 3:5-6 are familiar, comforting words, and yet sometimes, God still needs to call us back to these words, to remind us that God remains in control of all things, if we allow God to lead and if we are willing to follow. I think God is reminding this Emmaus Community of that very thing right now.

Like you, I have been greatly distressed over the decline in the demand for Emmaus Walks for both men and women. We have been prayerful, and we have been diligent in getting the word out about who we are and what we do, yet we have had to postpone walk after walk. And, we are not alone! Emmaus Communities across the region and around the country are experiencing the same thing. We have been dejected and dispirited, acting as though there is no reason for our continuing existence, if we are not having walks on the same schedule as we have in the past. But I think we need to pause, to consider the wisdom of Proverbs 3:5-6, and regroup. *Because* we have been prayerful and diligent in our sincere efforts to reach people, we need to realize that God *is speaking*, and speaking loudly. The question then becomes, "Are we willing to listen, and perhaps, to be redirected?"

If our prayer is to bring in the pilgrims, to have walks as before, and despite a concerted effort by the entire community, this has *not* happened, then God is clearly saying and doing something else. So, we need to let go of our wishes and expectations, and look at what God is trying to do and say.

So, to help us re-focus, let's go back to the basics!

What is the Walk to Emmaus? It is an international movement that consists of Emmaus Communities all around the world. Per the bylaws of all Emmaus communities, the object of the Community is "*to inspire, challenge, and equip church members for action in their home, churches, places of work, and the world community through the Emmaus experience,*" which includes "*a three-day short course in Christian discipleship.*"

Well, there it is: the purpose is **not** the three-day short course in Christian discipleship (aka, "The Emmaus Walk"). Our work **includes** the three-day short course in Christian discipleship, but we do not exist solely to have Walks. We exist to inspire, challenge, and equip church members for action! So, if we do not have pilgrims for a Walk, perhaps we should take that time to consider how well we are inspiring, challenging, and equipping those who are living in their Fourth Days.

The work of the Emmaus Community includes, again per the By-Laws, three phases: (1) the *Pre-Event* phase, (2) the *Event* phase, and (3) the *Post-Event* phase. This means that our work consists of the following:



Springfield Area Emmaus

November 2014

Pre-Event Phase – a plan for sound recruitment, communication about, and proper preparation of participants and team for their three-day introductory Emmaus experience...

Event Phase – separate three-day events for men and women, using the Upper Room Walk to Emmaus Director’s Manual, Team Manual, and Emmaus Office outlines, and...

Post-Event Phase – a follow-up plan that includes group reunions, monthly gatherings, leadership development for increasing the Emmaus Community’s knowledge of the method and its effectiveness of providing spiritual renewal for the local church, and encouragement of church involvement.

While we do the work of each of the three phases, nowhere in the bylaws of this (or any) Emmaus Community does it say that the work of any one phase is more important than any of the other phases! So, whenever a Walk is postponed, instead of seeing it as a sign of gloom and doom, that God has forsaken the Community (or that we are not doing our part in preparing or getting the word out), perhaps it is a chance to put extra energy and emphasis in the Post-Event phase of our task!

I sincerely believe that we have not just the opportunity, but the God-given responsibility, to focus on the final third of our three tasks. We now have the time to focus on building the community through fellowship, through exceptional monthly gatherings, and leadership development events. After all, a Walk lasts three days, but our Fourth Days carry us into eternity.

To the Springfield Area Emmaus Community I say, “Be encouraged! God is present and active in our community, regardless of how many Walks we have postponed! Let us trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding (or, *expectations*). In all our ways, let us acknowledge God, and God will make our paths straight!”



Pastor Sherri Blackwell

Kairos dates of Interest



ORW #41 November 6-9

London CI #7 November 6-9



Prayer and cookies are always desired contact Greg Stout, Kairos Rep for questions or check out the information on the web

<http://www.spfldemmaus.com>





Music has always been a very strong part of the Emmaus Community, and I would like to see it become a stronghold again! If you are interested in playing or singing in a Praise Band, or sharing your Love for the Lord via special music during one of our gatherings.....Feel free to get with me at any gathering, or contact me on my cell at937-206-3793.

In God's Love,
Ben Webster, Music Director

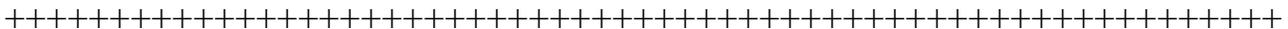


2014 Gathering Dates start at 7pm

November 9	December 14
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Wanted: *Sponsors willing to contact and sign pilgrims for a walk in 2015. If you have questions contact, Kathy Zimmerman, Sponsorship*



Veterans Day is November 11, are you a Veteran many restaurants are serving you free so take your families out for a celebration of your service to this country. You might be able to get some great food or coffee, more than one day. So, take advantage and get recognized for your service. Thanks for serving your country.



If you have not completed an early voting get out and Vote, it is your right!



The month of November starts off with All Saints Day, a day to celebrate all believers in Jesus Christ and the unity of the entire church. For some churches the emphasis on this day is for the saints (believers) that have gone on to heaven. But in other churches the emphasis is on celebrating the life of the saints making up the Body of Christ here on earth. I think we need to celebrate the Body of Christ that we see in our Emmaus community. (Reprint from November 2012 Spiritual Director Message)



Enter into His gates with **thanksgiving**, *And* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name. Psalm 100:4 NKJV

The biggest holiday of November is Thanksgiving which is celebrated here in United States. Do you remember the true reason why Thanksgiving is celebrated? What are you thankful for? Who are you thankful for?



“ Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, **Thanksgiving** and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Revelations 7:12 NKJV