

**October 2008**

Dear North Shore Fellowship,

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)*

The pattern of the earliest expression of Christ's body fueled by Spirit power was 1) enjoying the gospel of the kingdom together, 2) embodying Christ by meeting one another's needs, 3) embodying Christ by meeting needs outside the body, 4) enjoying favor with all these people, 5) so that outsiders entered into Christ's body.

**Our mission is to be a church longing to enjoy and embody Jesus Christ in the North Shore, Chattanooga, and the world.** In the past year, we have grown in enjoying the gospel with one another and embodying Christ to one another. Around 400 members are enjoying Jesus with one another in **fellowship groups**. We have a long way to go in caring for one another well, but we have helped one another with heartaches, kid's needs, marriage crises, legal problems, financial problems, and even mortgage payments. Well done!

If you have put off being connected in fellowship within our body, remember you are wanted! Please contact your **parish elder** (listed on [www.northshore1.org](http://www.northshore1.org)) for a fellowship group near you.

Some of our fellowships have taken initial steps towards **embodying Christ to those outside** our body. Some of our Signal Mountain groups have discovered needs among their neighbors and given financially to meet those needs. A Southside group helped move new neighbors in and are including them into their fellowship. A North Chattanooga group helps serve a meal for the homeless community through Forrest Avenue Methodist church.

*It's time for all of us to grow together in meeting the needs of our neighbors. Where do we start?* 1) We begin by **praying** for God to burden our hearts for people for whom he is opening a door for us to care (Col. 4:2-6). 2) We **move together as a fellowship** toward these people to show our care (Phil.1:27). 3) We **become like** (adjust to) the people to whom we are showing care (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

*Who* should your group pray about moving toward? I'll suggest three possibilities: 1) **neighbors**, 2) a **shared sphere of influence** or affinity group (clubs, kid's schools or sports teams, professional groups, natural network of friends), 3) a **redemptive agency** that is nearby (Angel Food, Northside Neighborhood House, Normal Park School, AAA, Room in the Inn, Choices, Why kNOw, etc.). *What* do we do as we move toward them? **Get to know them and meet their needs.**

The people of God do not exist for themselves, to protect themselves, or to isolate themselves. *We are called to give ourselves away so that outsiders may experience the light of the gospel.* So, as you participate together in the gospel through fellowship groups, please pray together about where God is opening a door for care, move together toward these people, and become like them so you can experience the gospel at work with them.

Grateful for you,

Gary