

August, 2010 Volume 10, Issue 8

G.R.A.C.E. Website www.gracemmaus.org

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### <u>NEXT</u> <u>GATHERI NGS</u>

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Saturday, September 18 FUMC ATHENS Fellowship, 5:00pm Potluck Dinner, 5:30pm Worship, 6:30pm

DIRECTIONS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE GRACEMMAUS.ORG WEBSITE

YA'LL COME!!

## DEAR G.R.A.C.E.

Greetings from your Community Lay Director.

Plato once said, "Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something." I sometimes smile to myself as I'm writing this article and sheepishly wonder, what label would Plato hang on me? This newsletter is published once a month but it sometimes seems to be twice a month. I do not feel foolish with my words to you this month. I want to take this opportunity to laud praise and thanks on those individuals that put this great publication together for us each month.

Joy Parker, newsletter editor, does a fantastic job in gathering the news articles and laying out the newsletter each month. The pressure and anxiety she faces monthly getting in the news articles submitted to her and then the deadline for putting it together for publication is more trying for her than it should be. Please give her a pat on the back and an "atta girl" when you next see and/or talk to her.

Tom Perdue, our GRACE computer geek, and I mean that as a compliment, does a brilliant job in getting Joy's product on the GRACE Website each month. Because of his knowledge and proficiency, we have our current monthly newsletter and archived past newsletters available to us on our website. Of course, Tom is the man behind our website also. He too deserves our thanks and gratitude. Please express your appreciation to him, your first opportunity.

There are a couple more items I want to mention:

We had a wonderful Gathering in Canton August 24<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to the Canton's Faithful Women's Reunion Group, Builders Men's Reunion Group, and Pastor Sam Jones for your hospitality and leadership in putting on a great gathering that was well attended. Also, thanks to Mark Reeves and the Canton FUMC Praise Band for beautiful and inspiring leadership of music. Lynda Symns, your 4<sup>th</sup> Day Talk was a wonderful, spiritually inspired, message for all of us. Thank you.

 Mark your calendar for August 28 for the next Community Gathering at FUMC Lindale. Sponsorship training, to be led by Tom Perdue will begin at 4:30 PM to be followed by Fellowship and Cover Dish at 5:30 with worship at 6:30.

I want to close with a reminder that the fall Walks are fast approaching. Let's get our Pilgrim's applications in soon. We expect we'll fill both Walks, so don't tarry and miss out on getting your Pilgrim's application in before they fill up. Grace and Peace, Dan Matthews

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### From the Spiritual Director

Hey all:

Grace and Peace from our Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul Arden is an author and creative consultant. He says creativity is а matter perspective. For example, "Don't look for the next opportunity. The one you have in hand is the opportunity." Many of us try to live from High Point to High Point, only to drop back into the valley of repetition. Our weakest point as a community is our busyness. We operate under the mind-set that we cannot afford time for extra things because we are simply too busy. Moreover, you know, it just is not true.

If there were any one thing, I would instill in every person I meet it would be that we could not go on living in the same way we always have. Albert Einstein said, "There is nothing hat is a more certain sign of insanity than to do the same thing over and over and expect the results to be different."

This applies to our community. We have hundreds of people who have participated on a Walk, but we have lackluster participation.

My heartaches when I see someone discover the love of God and then inch by imperceptible inch slip back into mediocrity. Yet, this is just what so many of us do. We finally taste the goodness of God and then we shelve the Emmaus weekend into that same dusty old room of our minds where we keep our first dance, our first car, and our favorite old songs.

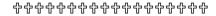
Beverly Sills was quoted saying, "Thee are no short cuts to any place worth going." How right she is! It is a challenge for you to keep up with the community. You want to make the Gatherings but it is almost inconvenient.

Nevertheless, imagine with me for a minute. Imagine a new making his/her pilgrim Gathering. They wander in unsure and uncomfortable. They find a place to sit and wait. Fifty or so people wander in and they all share worship and cookies together. The pilgrim goes home wondering why she/he is so pumped, and the sanctuary they just left was only 20% full.

Compare this to a pilgrim who enters the same Gathering and is greeted with the same intensity of affection, love and kindness, which greeted them on the Walk. Imagine that same pilgrim entering a sanctuary that is packed with loving brothers and sisters, all interested in the thriving success of the body of Christ. All of us struggle with our own troubles. Imagine them all sharing in a time of Holy Presence! What would that pilgrim say to other people at work the next day? Would you or the pilgrim look at troubles the same way tomorrow? Which of these two scenarios do you think will further the body of Christ? We know. About now you're mind is saying, "Yeah, but I can't make much difference." Or, "That's all fine, but you don't understand what ľm going through!" Yes, I know. Some of you see hope fleeting and some have felt the enemy's attack. I

know many of you have unbearable pressures. I also know many of you are holding on by a thread. I really do know. Moreover, I am astounded at you for not wanting to be among those who also understand this; those who have the ability to bless you, heal you, and comfort you! This month, rather than sit back and, for a fleeting moment, consider the Gathering only to dismiss it. Why don't you put it on your calendar and plan to be blessed! See you in Lindale.

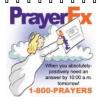
#### Mike Cline



Thank you Greater Rose Area Community Emmaus for your love and fellowship over the last two years. You provided caring warmth and compassion with lively worship to God. I hope that somehow I have made a difference in your lives. You have made a difference in mine.

Stay focused on serving a Wonderful Savior and a Gracious Lord in love and fellowship with each other.

De Colores David Mays Former Spiritual Director.



Our upcoming Men's and Women's Walks are now listed on <a href="www.3dayol.org">www.3dayol.org</a> for you to sign up to participate in the 72 hour prayer vigil. You may also access the site through the G.R.A.C.E. website <a href="www.gracemmaus.org">www.gracemmaus.org</a>. I will look forward to seeing YOUR name there!

De Colores! Judy Hawn ተተተተተተተተተተተተተተ

#### WALK 54



Hello, my name is Mike Minor. I went on my Emmaus Walk in the summer of 2003 at Hilltop campground in Garrison (East Texas Emmaus Community walk #63). My wife Elizabeth and I attend church at Henderson First United Methodist Church. We have three children. Catherine is a senior at Texas A&M University. Michael William is a freshman at Texas A&M University and Patrick is an 8th grader at Henderson Middle school and plans to attend Texas A&M University. Can vou see a pattern? Elizabeth we on her Emmaus Walk in the spring of 2003 at Camp Gilmont and she and I have enjoyed working on many Emmaus teams since then. I am honored to be the Lay Director for walk

We are having our first team meeting Saturday August 8th at St Luke's in Kilgore. Our Conference room team is as follows:

LD - Mike Minor SD - Ricky Ricks

ALD - David McPherson

ALD - Tom McDonald

ALD - Ken Braswell

BR - Burton Love

ASD - Jarret Major

ASD - Mike Cline

ASD - Doug Smith

ASD - Richard Luna

TL - David Barnard

TL - Frank Copeland

TL - Jay Edwards

TL - Bryan Jeanes

TL - Phillip McKanna

TL - Michael Prince

ATL - David Barnes

ATL - Roland Haley

ATL - Rick Hanning

ATL - Mike Johnston

ATL - Creig Prince

I know that this will be "The best walk ever", so please help fill it up.

DeColores! Mike Minor ተተተተተተተተተተተተ

#### WALK 55



My name is Scotti Wood and I attended Grace Walk #11 in May 2000 and sat at the table of Rachel. My husband, Bill Holda, and we have six children ranging in age from 41 to 14 (down to two on the payroll). ☺ We worship at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Kilgore when Bill is not substituting at other churches. I am active in a reunion group with four other special women and have worked on several other Emmaus teams including outside teams, ALD, TL and ATL positions. Emmaus has a special place in my husband's and my heart because it was a spark that opened up a door for us to become a couple. I coached at the high school and college levels for 17 years and for the last 6 have been a counselor. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and have a private practice in Longview as well as contracting with several entities to provide counseling.

The team is almost assembled and clergy is filled. We are excited to have two women clergy that will be at the walk all weekend. The first team meetings begin this month and we are ready and eager to begin God's work. We still need some help with the outside team so please contact me if you would like to help and I will point you in the right direction. The team members are:

LD - Scotti Wood SD - Bill Holda

ALD - Joanne Skeen

ALD - Robin Gillian

ALD – Jana Russell

BR - Teresa Elliott

ASD – Amy Hodge

ASD – Mike Cline

ASD – Doug Wintermute

ASD – Jane Lovett-Porr

MD - LeeAnne Meyers

AMD - Carol Younger TL – Cynthia Beller

TL – Jeannie Hanssen

TL – Kathy Kirkpatrick

TL – Lanett Moser

TL - Susan Jeanes

TL - Kay McKinley

ATL - Karol Johnston

ATL - Chiquita Armstrong ATL – Maxine Kinder

ATL - Susan Smith

ATL - Anna Rhode

ATL – Pam Wintermute

STL – Shirley Starkey

Please pray for this team as we prepare for Walk #55!

De Colores, Scotti



### **GATHERINGS** for **GRACE(2010)**

Aug. 28, 2010, FUMC **Lindale**; Sponsor training 4:30PM; Potluck Dinner 5:45PM; Worship 6:45PM

September 18, 2010, FUMC Athens; Fellowship 5:00 p.m., Potluck Dinner 5:30 p.m., Worship 6:30 p.m.

Nov. 20 2010 Grand Ultreva: Green **Acres Baptist Church; Babe Chick** training 4:30PM; Potluck Dinner 5:45PM; Worship 6:45PM

#### December, 2010 – Being planned

Our Local Gathering on July 24th was hosted by 1st United Methodist Church in Canton. Dee and Dave Calhoun worked to coordinate the Gathering with their local Emmaus brothers and sisters. Rev. Sam Jones, senior pastor of Canton First United Methodist Church provided the welcome (with his dog Harvey) and officiated over the worship service with assistance from Jarratt Major and Dee Calhoun. Dan Mathews. Community Lay Director, provided community announcements. In addition, we were blessed to hear a short presentation from Dr. Bruce

King, Director of the next Kairos weekend at the Michael Unit. There are many way to participate in the fantastic ministry without going into the prison. The FUMC Praise Band under the leadership of Mark Reeves provided wonderful musical accompaniment. Linda Symns provide an inspired Fourth Day talk. We were blessed with an attendance of approximately 75.

Our next Gathering will be an overall Community Gathering planned on a quarterly basis in the Tyler area. Lindale UMC will host this Gathering. Sponsorship training will held from 4:30-5:30P. Pot luck dinner at 5:45P with worship at 6:45P.

Two areas are still talking about sponsoring Gatherings in Dec. In one case there is the possibility that the Gathering would be coordinated with a living Nativity. Stay tuned as we learn more about plans for this Gathering. Worshiping together to praise and honor the birth of Christ actually sounds very special. We can't have too many Gatherings. We still have not heard from the Longview/ Marshall area. There is nothing wrong with having more than one Gathering in a month. Our target is still to have them geographically separated to assure more community members have a chance to participate.

If you would like to plan a Gathering, contact Burton Love at 903 425 3864(h) 903 880 5462(cell) or burtonlove@embargmail.com. You can also get guidance from any of the other board members. Keep in mind. it is not difficult and there is a lot of help available to make it a success. It is a true blessing when it all comes together.

We look forward to seeing you at one or more of the GRACEmmaus Gatherings in 2010. DeColores



ELECTION TIME!! If you, or someone you know, would be interested in running for the board, please contact Ken Braswell ASAP!!!



# Lay Directors for upcoming Walks

Men's Walk #54, Camp Gilmont October 7-10, 2010 Lay Director: Mike Minor

Women's Walk #55, Camp Gilmont October 14-17, 2010 Lay Director: Scotti Wood

Men's Walk #56, Disciples Crossing March 3-6, 2011 Lay Director: Bill Durr

Women's Walk #57, Disciples Crossing March 10-13, 2011 Lay Director: Toyia Urbaniak

Men's Walk #58, Camp Gilmont September 29-October 2, 2011 Lay Director: David McPherson

Women's Walk #59, Camp Gilmont October 27-30, 2011 Lay Director: Cindy Hooser

#### Hello...

I am trying to find a home for a BUNCH of Christian **CASSETTE** Tapes! I have quite a collection that I am willing to **GIVE** to a good home. If your church, you, or someone you know, might like and be able to use these cassettes, I would love to talk to you. The cassettes are mainly Contemporary Christian – and span from probably the late 80's through the 90's (when CD's became more popular!) I am NOT wanting to sell, I am just wanting to find someone who might be able to use them – church library, hospice library, prison ministry, school library, personal library...

Please email me if you know someone who might like this collection. khaqedorn@valornet.com

Thanks, Kim

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- 1. The Board of Directors consists of three classes of five persons, a new class being elected each year, the oldest class rotating off. Therefore, being on the board is a three-year commitment.
- 2. The Emmaus community elects the board by voting each year on members of a new class from among nominees selected by a nominating committee and approved by the board. Voting is usually done through a mail ballot in the newsletter.
- 3. Each person on the board chairs one of the suggested committees needed to support the Walks and follow-up. These committees serve many functions, one of the most fundamental being leadership development.
- 4. Board meetings are held once a month.

### **GRACE Board for 2010**

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#### Hi Dad!

After living what I felt was a 'decent' life, my time on earth came to the end. The first thing I remember is sitting on a bench in the waiting room of what I thought to be a court house. The doors opened and I was instructed to come in and have a seat by the defense table.

As I looked around I saw the 'prosecutor. 'He was a

villainous looking gent who snarled as he stared at me. He definitely was the most evil person I have ever seen.

I sat down and looked to my left and there sat My Attorney, kind and gentle looking man whose appearance seemed so familiar to me, I felt I knew Him

The corner door flew open and there appeared the Judge in full flowing robes. He commanded an awesome presence as He moved across the room I couldn't take my eyes off of Him. As He took His seat behind the bench, He said, 'Let us begin.'

The prosecutor rose and said, 'My name is Satan and I am here to show you why this man belongs in hell.' He proceeded to tell of lies that I told, things that I stole, and in the past when I cheated others. Satan told of other horrible Perversion that were once in my life and the more he spoke, the further down in my seat I sank. I was so embarrassed that I couldn't look at anyone, even my own Attorney, as the Devil told of sins that even I had completely forgotten about.

As upset as I was at Satan for telling all these things about me, I was equally upset at My Attorney who sat there silently not offering any form of defense at all. I know I had been guilty of those things, but I had done some good in my life - couldn't that at least equal out part of the harm I'd done?

Satan finished with a fury and said, 'This man belongs in hell, he is guilty of all that I have charged and there is not a person who can prove otherwise.'

When it was His turn, My
Attorney first asked if He
might approach the bench. The
Judge allowed this over the
strong objection of Satan, and
beckoned Him to come forward...
As He got up and started
walking, I was able to see Him
in His full splendor and
majesty. I realized why He
seemed so familiar; this was
Jesus representing me, my Lord
and my Savior

He stopped at the bench and softly said to the Judge, 'Hi, Dad,' and then He turned to

address the court. 'Satan was correct in saying that this man had sinned, I won't deny any of these allegations. And, yes, the wages of sin is death, and this man deserves to be punished.'

Jesus took a deep breath and turned to His Father with outstretched arms and proclaimed, 'However, I died on the cross so that this person might have eternal life and he has accepted Me as his Savior, so he is Mine.'

My Lord continued with, 'His name is written in the Book of Life, and no one can snatch him from Me. Satan still does not understand yet. This man is not to be given justice, but rather mercy.'

As Jesus sat down, He quietly paused, looked at His Father and said,

'There is nothing else that needs to be done.' 'I've done it all.'

The Judge lifted His mighty hand and slammed the gavel down. The following words bellowed from His lips...'This man is free. The penalty for him has already been paid in full. 'Case dismissed.'

As my Lord led me away, I could hear Satan ranting and raving, 'I won't give up, I will win the next one.

I asked Jesus as He gave me my instructions where to go next, 'Have you ever lost a case?'

Christ lovingly smiled and said, 'Everyone that has come to Me and asked me to represent them has received the same verdict as you, 'Paid In Full'.

'Stop telling God how big your storm is. Instead, tell the storm how big your God is!'

(submitted by Tom Perdue)

Dear Friends of Kairos:

Susan and I completed the 36th Kairos weekend at the maximum-security Mark W. Michael Unit in East Texas April 22-25. It was a huge blessing as always with some men accepting

Christ and others growing closer in their Christian faith. Here are some of the highlights:

A 65-year-old man at my table family (9 men per table including a table leader, myself, an assistant table leader, clergy, and six men in white two blacks, two whites, and two Hispanics - with no two prisoners of the same race or ethnicity sitting next to one another), said the Kairos weekend was the best time of his life. On Saturday after lunch and a brief time in the chapel (the mess hall, community room where we hear the 11 major talks of the weekend, and the chapel are all in the same gym, with the three rooms partitioned by plastic tarp hanging from pvc pipe) the 42 participants were dismissed to the community room where the tables had been cleared except for their bagfuls of handwritten letters. The 65-yearold man said he received more letters on Saturday than he had in his entire 24 years in prison. A 51-year-old man at my table said he had received more letters than he had in his entire 17 years in prison. Sergeant Morris, a veteran corrections officer and a big supporter of Kairos who greases the skids for our weekends and monthly reunions, said all 42 men cried when they were reading their letters. This is remarkable since the last thing a prisoner wants to do is have someone seeing him cry in prison. The 51year-old man at my table said he had seven dads, all of which beat him with sticks and other devices. One of his dads raped his 13-year-old sister who became pregnant from this hideous, despicable, and unconscionable crime. Most of the men who live in a maximum-security prison come from terrible homes where they have been abused or abandoned, which is a form of abuse in itself. Many of the men don't even know who their fathers are. Many of the parents they do have are on drugs. The 51-year-old man said he had not cried since he was a child because every time he cried he was beaten even more.

The food was a big hit as always. One man remarked when he was served two platefuls of fried chicken that he had not tasted fried chicken in the 17 years he had been locked up. The

hamburgers were amazing to the men as well. The burgers were thick and served with condiments, tomatoes, onions, pickles, and lettuce. The prisoners don't ever get lettuce, tomatoes, or onions and pickles are only served about three times a year. The "burgers" they get in prison are 70-80% soy, are very thin, and served on white buns with absolutely nothing on them, including no seasoning, not even salt. The banana pudding was huge, as was the chocolate cupcakes. pecan pie, apple turnover. The men never receive any of these items. The last time one man said he saw an apple turnover was 10 years ago when he spotted one in a picture. The pasta salad, complete with fresh broccoli, onions, lettuce, noodles, olives, etc., was very popular. The men do get broccoli in the unit but it is cooked to the point that when a fork touches it, it squishes into a texture like pea soup with no flavor no nutrients. We had enough food that the men generally were able to eat at least two full plates of everything with some men eating three hamburgers, and these were big hamburgers that the 12-person (10 women and two men) outside team grilled back at our home base, 8 miles from the unit. We had thousands of homemade cookies and dozens of loaves of breakfast breads and the men never came close to consuming all of them.

We received hundreds of posters from around the world encouraging the men, letting the men know that they are not alone and that they were being prayed for. Posters came in from Australia, England, and Canada among other countries, and from dozens of prisons, Emmaus groups, Sunday School classes, etc. from around the nation. The prayer chain stunned many men. There were several hundred multi-colored links in the prayer chain, with the links stapled together like a Christmas tree decoration, with each link representing some individual, named on the link, who had committed to praying for 30 minutes throughout the entire 72-hour weekend. Ouite a commitment for the person who signed up for the 3:30 to 4:00 am slot. This chain was draped around and throughout the community room.

The music was awesome as ever with Pat Garner leading the way accompanied by two residents.

But of all the agape, the most powerful are the letters, especially those from young children. The place mats, illustrated by young children as only children can do and expressing simple blunt messages of God's love for the brothers in white (the men wear all-white clothing), and decorating the tables for each of the five sit-down meals during the weekend, are also huge. Many men took care not to spill any food on their place mats and took them back to their houses each night. The men are particularly moved by the letters from young children. In my view, nothing comes closer to the purity of God's love than that of a small child. A small child happily colors their place mats with no thought of getting anything in return. The child has no agenda, no angle, no quid pro quo. The men yearn for the innocence of a small child, untarnished by prejudice and abuse. Many thanks to all of you who wrote letters. You have no idea how much these letters mean to the men, many of whom have not received correspondence in years if not decades. The letters are usually the turning point of the weekend and come on day three in the unit out of the 4-day weekend. Many men begin hugging us after they receive their letters, really remarkable considering that men don't hug in prison.

Now for some observations from the brothers in white on what the weekend meant to them.

"Thank God he called me out of the darkness. All the love in this room is evidence of God reaching out to me. God is at work in all of these volunteers (about 30 men on the free world team in the gym with another two men serving as runners, transporting food and other supplies to the unit). Even our families wouldn't do this."

"I'm now a better person and the hate in my heart is gone. The letters did it to me. If is wasn't for Kairos #36 I would not be here." "God is really good. People yesterday back at my house said I looked different."

"I was not scheduled to be here this weekend but an opening came up. I had a run-in with a sergeant, but a captain came up to me and asked for my offender ID badge. He said the prison chaplain wanted to see me. He said you're in Kairos and to report to the #7 gym. I had not seen the chaplain since my wife passed away five years ago. I saw a lot of love in this gym when I first walked in. It was incredible. I've struggled for a long time but now I know God loves me."

"I've been struggling with my faith ever since I got locked up. To tell you the truth I signed up for Kairos just for the food, but I found there was much more to it. God is good."

"I learned you can have a family by being in the midst of God."

"It was overwhelming, a life-changing event. The love of God is here."

"It is a blessing to see the love pouring out from all of you. There is power in unity. My family is in this whole room. We are one body and that is the church."

"There is nothing but love here and Jesus is love. Therefore, Jesus is here with us."

"I've experienced some real things here this weekend."

"We are so thankful and so blessed to be here."

"I appreciate the love of all of those people that wrote the letters."

"Christ took me out of bondage."

"God is in our midst. I have found unity, courage, freedom."

"To be a Christian means you have to be a thief and a drug user. The Kairos volunteers stole a lot of the stones that I had used in constructing a wall around my heart and they injected me with love."

"Thank God for choosing me to be here. Kairos is a great, great experience. The love is amazing. I can't explain it."

"Thank God for Kairos. For the first time in my life I have experienced the workmanship of God. I can see God's work in softening our hearts. Thank God for having His hands on each one of us. Thank God for His power to change lives."

"God's love is so big. I have never experienced anything like this in my whole life. He loves us all."

"The fellowship has been such a blessing."

"Thank the Lord for bringing me here. I already have made changes. I got on my knees last night and this morning for the first time in my life."

"Sergeant Morris helped me escape prison this weekend. I was not in prison these past four days."

"I'm going to share with other inmates what has been shared with me this weekend."

If you want to see God at work attend a Kairos closing ceremony. The men answer three questions.

1) In what spiritual condition did you arrive at Kairos?

#### Responses:

- the lowest spiritual condition of my life.
- I had no spiritual condition at all.
- Spiritual estrangement
- angry
- ashamed
- lost
- searching
- tired
- confused
- 2) What did you find here?
- a lot of love
- I found Jesus
- a lot of happiness and joy
- friendship
- learning and knowledge
- a lot of respect
- courage
- peace
- lots of tears
- faith
- power of God to change lives

- someone to lean on
- 3) What are you taking away from here?
- joy of finding my best friend, Jesus
- I have seen the light of Jesus Christ shining through the Kairos volunteers
- love in my heart
- a better understanding of Kairos
- newfound understanding of Jesus
- love and hope
- a new family
- a new self
- open hearts and minds
- sound of music
- self respect
- a desire to be happy and renewed
- an experience I will never forget
- a better understanding of God's love
- a new life of hope

Thanks again for your support and interest in Kairos. Susan and I are planning on working the #37 weekend in October. I will send out information this fall on ways you can support Kairos.

Yours in Christ,

Steve Kincheloe Michael Unit Kairos Team Member Dallas Walk to Emmaus

# G.R.A.C.E. Sponsorship

#### WHAT IS SPONSORSHIP?

Each person who attends The Walk to Emmaus has a sponsor. A sponsor is a person who has been through an Emmaus experience and is willing to share that experience with another new Emmaus participant. The sponsorship of a previous participant frees the current participant from any personal responsibilities that might distract him or her while on the experience. Sponsorship also under girds each participant's 72-hour experience with prayer and other expressions of God's love.

According to the dictionary, a sponsor is one who takes responsibility for another. The suffix "-ship" refers to the skill involved in the activity. So sponsorship is the skill of taking responsibility for another.

#### THE AIM OF SPONSORSHIP.

The aim of a sponsor should not be "to get all my friends to go," to fill up the weekend, to fix people's problems, or to reproduce one's own religious experience in others. Rather, the aim of the sponsor is to bring spiritual revitalization to Christians who will, in turn, bring new life and vision to the work of the church in the congregation, home, workplace, and community. The aim of sponsorship is to build up the body of Christ.

# A SPONSOR'S RESPONSIBILTIES.

Sponsorship is an act of love for God, for the participants in the Walk to Emmaus, for the Emmaus Community, and for the church. It is a demonstration of agape love. A sponsor will:

Pray for the participant's openness to God's call to discipleship.

Make an appointment with the participant (or participating couple) to discuss his or her participation in Emmaus.

Invite the participant to take part in Emmaus for the sake of a more vital relationship with Jesus Christ. The sponsor shares his or her faith, explains the basic purpose, elements, and follow-up dimensions of the Walk.

Ask the participant to make a commitment by filling out a registration form. If the participant is married, the sponsor will speak with both partners and encourage an equal commitment by both spouses.

Support the participant's Walk through prayers and otherwise. The sponsor will also support the participant's family by house-sitting, baby-sitting, watering plants, picking up mail, feeding pets, or just checking in with a spouse to see if any help or support is needed.

Encourage the participant in his/her continued journey and take the participant to Emmaus "gatherings" after the Walk weekend is over.

Help the participant re-enter his or her church and consider ways to act out new commitment and enthusiasm. Help the participant sponsor others.

#### ABOUT THE FOURTH DAY.

As participants conclude their Walk to weekends. Emmaus they introduced to the concept of the Fourth Day -- a symbol of the days of Christian pilgrimage that follow the three-day Emmaus experience. The Walk to Emmaus is a unique opportunity to reflect on one's faith journey and make a deeper commitment to Christ. In fact, "the whole reason for The Walk to Emmaus is to make you a more faithful disciple and active member in your church." Thus, the Fourth Day is central to the Emmaus experience, as it extends each individual's experience beyond the weekend and into life in the world.

In living their Fourth Davs. participants are encouraged continue to grow in relationship with Christ and live as faithful disciples in all of life. An important and necessary foundation for faithful Christian living is a vital connection to the Christian community for support, guidance, and challenge. This is most available through local communities, reunion groups, and the Emmaus Gatherings. Another way to be connected to the support of the Christian community is through studying the writings of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

If you are currently living your Fourth Day, you may find some helpful suggestions for faithful discipleship in the categories of Piety, Study, and Action.

# PIETY: GIVING OUR HEARTS TO CHRIST.

Group Reunion:

The Emmaus group reunion is a small accountability group of two to six persons who have usually participated in the three-day Walk to Emmaus and who want to continue their pursuit of a life lived wholly in the grace of God. These small follow-up groups help pilgrims translate the message conveyed on the Walk to Emmaus weekend into a daily walk with Christ. With the regular support of a few faithful friends, the gift of God's love in Jesus Christ becomes a lifestyle of Christian discipleship through the threefold discipline of piety, study, and action.

Group reunions meet at regular times, usually weekly for an hour. The meeting consists of persons' sharing the stories of their walk with Christ during the past week.

Members listen to one another, celebrate the grace of God in each person's life, and reinforce each one's core commitment to living in union with Christ in all facets of daily life. Members express that reinforcement through gentle accountability, encouragement, and support of one's stated discipline and plans.

# STUDY: GIVING OUR MINDS TO CHRIST.

A mature Christian is an informed Christian -- informed about the mind and heart of God by knowing scripture. A Christian knows about the world and its needs and works toward gaining the best insights on how to alleviate the hurting world's agonies. Human beings rise above the animal world of simple instincts when they become knowledgeable and use that knowledge to help build God's kingdom. Study, like piety, can be approached in an intentional. systematic way, resulting in a deepening of your relationship with God and an empowering of your Christian discipleship.

# ACTION: GIVING OUR HANDS TO CHRIST.

#### Group Reunion:

Reunion groups provide a natural launching pad for mission in the community. Reunion groups are also a support base for acts of agape for Emmaus weekends. Shared engagement in service to others deepens friendships and opens up avenues for Christian action.

Some groups, where members relate to the same church, find a shared ministry within their congregations. Other groups choose to serve together in the kitchen for an Emmaus weekend or make it their mission to facilities for Emmaus weekends. Many groups spend time making table agape, creating banners, and writing general agape letters to support their own and other Walks to Emmaus. Some Emmaus groups take ministries in their local communities.

As valuable as group activities and a sense of common mission can be, Emmaus groups must remember that these efforts are "extracurricular." Always make time for the primary work of the group -- reviewing the service sheet and reflecting on Christ's presence and call.

#### Sponsorship:

Do you remember how much your own experience on the Walk to Emmaus meant to you? It would not have been possible without the prayer and sacrifice of your sponsor. The responsibilities of being a sponsor are many and crucial to the effectiveness of the experience. You can share God's love with someone you know by sponsoring him or her during an Emmaus weekend.

#### Local Church Involvement:

The sole purpose of the Emmaus Movement is to strengthen disciples within the ministry of individual congregations. Emmaus is in partnership with the church to inspire its leaders to become more effective and intentional in their ministry. Although the Walk to Emmaus is a unique and powerful instrument through which faithful people are renewed and inspired, it cannot provide the well-rounded programs such as education, evangelism, missions, and stewardship that are

provided by an individual congregation. One way to act in Christ's service is to become involved in some facet of your local parish's ministry.

#### HOW TO BECOME A SPONSOR.

In order to sponsor someone on Walk to Emmaus, a person must first have been on The Walk itself. A sponsor should also be active in Fourth Day. Having been through the experience and being engaged in ongoing spiritual formation through Fourth Day gives a person perspective on how to sponsor.

Beyond these requirements, the basic attitude of a sponsor is one of prayerful discernment. This results in intentional acts of unconditional love, or what is often termed "the first act of agape." A resource for further help is the Emmaus Library Series booklet, Sponsorship, by Richard and Janine Gilmore. The following is an excerpt from "Sponsorship":

"Sponsorship can be unwise or wise. Unwise sponsorship results from unbridled enthusiasm that wants everyone to have the same experience. Sponsors with unbridled enthusiasm approach anybody and everybody with the admonition that "you need to go on The Walk," and that open invitation is the primary (sometimes the only)

emphasis. This approach lacks discernment and will result in a burden for the church. Such efforts in sponsorship frequently result in religious fringe groups within the church or possibly a parachurch of "Emmausites." While the individual being sponsored may benefit, that individual does not go back into the church to foster growth and renewal. The lack of commitment at this point is contrary to the purpose of Emmaus.

Wise sponsorship is careful, intentional, prayerful, and purposeful because it results from God's leading. The pilgrims return to their churches and community renewed in their commitment to be effective disciples."

#### HOW TO FIND A SPONSOR.

If you know someone who has attended Emmaus, ask your friend to tell you about his or her experience of the Walk to Emmaus. Your friend will help you decide whether you would find this experience helpful. Your friend will also help you find a sponsor for your Emmaus participation.

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