

# G.R.A.C.E. News

## Grace For Today

May, 2005  
Volume 5, Issue 5

G.R.A.C.E. Website  
[www.gracemmaus.org](http://www.gracemmaus.org)

### Inside this Issue

- 1 From our Community Lay Director
- 2 A letter from the Community Spiritual Director
- 3 Memories from the Women's Lay Director and What is all this Fourth Day talk.

### Next Gathering

Saturday

May 14<sup>th</sup>

@ NOON,

1<sup>st</sup> UMC, Henderson,

Pot Luck Lunch

G.R.A.C.E. REGISTRAR  
P.O. Box 44  
Judson TX.  
75660-0044

Dear **G.R.A.C.E.**

Community, with our Women's Walk No. 33, just completed and our October Men's and Women's walks fast approaching, it is fitting that we once again better understand what sponsoring a pilgrim is really all about. **Sponsoring is not something that is to be taken lightly**, nor is it taken without prayerful consideration. While we have a number of sponsors who understand fully the responsibility they have agreed to accept by inviting a pilgrim on a Walk to Emmaus. Unfortunately, there are some who might have overlooked the details of sponsorship. Brothers and sisters we do need those pilgrims on our upcoming walks that the Holy Spirit is working on right now. Please review the following information (taken directly from the Upper Room's, Walk to Emmaus website) about being a sponsor.

Sponsoring a pilgrim is an awesome responsibility and a blessing beyond our understanding.

### What is a Sponsor?

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 friend a new Emmaus participant. The sponsorship of a previous participant (*the Sponsor*) frees the current participant (*the Pilgrim*) to be free from any personal responsibilities that might distract him or her while on the experience (*the Walk*). 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. **Therefore, 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 their congregation, home, workplace, and community. **The aim of sponsorship is to build up the body of Christ.**

### A Sponsors Responsibility:

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 the participating couple) to discuss his or hers or theirs 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 need to 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 Pilgrim's 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 to sponsor others.

### How to Become a Sponsor.

In order to sponsor someone on a Walk to Emmaus, a person must have first been on The Walk himself or herself. A sponsor should also be active in Fourth Day. Having been through the "Walk to Emmaus" experience and becoming involved, and engaging in ongoing spiritual formation and growth through Fourth Day activity and service gives one perspective on how to be an effective sponsor. Beyond these needed requirements, the basic attitude of a sponsor is one of prayerful discernment. The results of this are intentional acts of unconditional love, or what is often

termed as "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 (and sometimes the only) emphasis. This approach is bad and **lacks** the discernment of the Holy Spirit, and will result in a burden for the church. Sadly such efforts in sponsorship frequently result in religious fringe groups within the church or possibly a para-church of "Emmausites." While the individual that is 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 should be 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 Pilgrim.

If you know someone who has shown an interest in attending Emmaus, share with your friend about your experience of the Walk to Emmaus. Your friends desire will help you to decide whether you should pursue this opportunity.

**Finally, mark your calendars right now for the upcoming G.R.A.C.E. Gathering**

**in Henderson, TX. We will be meeting on Saturday, May 14, at 1<sup>st</sup> UMC in Henderson. See the website for map and directions. Our gathering starts at NOON with a Potluck Lunch. Do not miss this opportunity to gather with friends and Emmaus family in worship and fellowship.**

Grace and peace

*DeColores* **Bill Burgdorf**  
**G.R.A.C.E.**  
**Community Lay Director**



**Open Letter to the G.R.A.C.E. Emmaus Community**

**From the Community Spiritual Director**

Hey all:

**Grace and Peace from our Lord Jesus Christ!**

Paul Arden is an author and creative consultant. He says creativity is a matter of 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.

## Walk #33 Lay Director's Report

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 that 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, *"There 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 pilgrim making his/her first 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 I'm 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 Henderson.

*De Colores* Mike Cline  
G.R.A.C.E. Community  
Spiritual Director



What can I say? The same thing every lay director has always said, **"It's the best ever!!!!!!"** The setting (Disciple's Crossing) was beautiful. The camp staff members were very congenial and responded quickly when we contacted them. The weather was perfect for the entire weekend. The team really bonded and served the Lord and the Pilgrims in His Spirit! Lives were touched and changed and faiths were deepened for both pilgrims and team members. Every one was in place and ready to begin on time and even early. The outside/servant team was awesome. They anticipated our needs and were ready to serve in any way they could – always with a smile on their face. Their prayers during dying moments touched us all. In addition, you, the entire G.R.A.C.E. Community, were behind us with your prayers for the entire weekend. Thank you for your presence – through prayer, agape gifts, the candlelight service and the closing – from all of us on Walk #33.

*De Colores* Kay McKinley



## FOURTH DAY

### About the Fourth Day

As participants conclude their Walk to Emmaus weekends, they are 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." (Bob Wood, Day Four) 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 Days, participants are encouraged to 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 church 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**

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 often express that

reinforcement of love through gentle accountability, encouragement, and support of one's stated discipline and plans.

*Excerpted with permission from **The Group Reunion** by Stephen D. Bryant. Copyright © 1995 by The Upper Room.*

### **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.

For more study possibilities, see the Emmaus Reading List's selections for Study.

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### **Action:**

#### **Giving Our Hands to Christ**

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 reunion 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 set up 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 on ministries in their local communities.

As valuable as reunion 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 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. For more information about sponsorship, visit the Sponsorship page.

*[Excerpted with permission from **Day Four: The Pilgrim's Continued Journey** by Robert Wood and Marie Livingston Roy. Copyright © 1986 by The Upper Room.]*

### **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.

*De Colores*

**See you in**

**Henderson!!!**