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Hope For Wholeness Network Affiliate Ministry



Referral Ministry of ROCK-Reclaim Our Culture Kentuckiana

THIS MONTH'S MEDITATION SCRIPTURE: *And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common. Acts 2:44*

[Can We Be A Better Church?](#)

Well, let's see. Most of our churches are characterized by these things: corporate meetings where we worship by singing, praying, preaching, teaching; we eat together; we do "outreach," whatever that looks like in each of our different circles; many congregations are involved in sending out missionaries to various parts of our communities, states, and other countries. While all these things are good, and it's important for us to be thankful to Father for the congregation to which He has directed us, are we being the best reflection of Jesus we can be to non-believers, and to each other? Many of us born-again churchgoers still live our safe Christian lives, showing up whenever the doors are opened, yet we only just scratch the surface of who the Body of Christ is called to be. Many of us never get past the Sunday-best outfits; the superficial pleasantries exchanges; the smiles on our faces that appear as soon as we hit the church parking lot, then disappear (just as suddenly as they showed up) as we depart the property.

We call this togetherness fellowship. I checked a Webster's dictionary and found the primary definition for fellowship is, "companionship; friendly association." Seems characteristic of those superficial pleasantries exchanges. I also checked out a Webster's thesaurus, which shows that one of the synonyms for fellowship is **intimacy**. Now, there's a word you don't hear real often in very many of our church gatherings (unless, maybe, we're talking about sex in marriage).

Intimacy suggests familiarity with other individuals, a closeness that goes beyond surface knowledge. In order for true intimacy to occur in our relationships, there must be an open and honest disclosure of ourselves: the good and bad, the pretty and ugly, the neat and messy. It takes courage, trust, bold truthfulness, and vulnerability to develop intimate relationships. And that is exactly why many never get past the surface pleasantries! What if they don't like me when they get to know the real me? What if they reject me? What if they make fun of me? If we're totally honest about it, as unfortunate **and** un-Christ like as it is, these responses do occur in our churches. Why would any girl want to disclose her eating disorder? Why would any married couple want to share about their long-standing anger and fighting with

each other? Why would any guy share about his same-sex attractions or his cross-dressing? Why would any parents open up about their tendency to verbally or emotionally abuse their children? Why would the teenager who's being sexually abused by the youth pastor ever want to tell someone he's being molested repeatedly? Why would the widow share about her financial struggles? Why would the man who has trouble keeping a job disclose his alcoholism he uses to not feel the pain of his perceived failures? If the church isn't a safe place to be who we are along our journey to holiness, it's no wonder we opt for surface-y! **Let's face it! The Church, by and large, does not know how, or want, to deal with messy.** Unless it's the socially acceptable kinds of sin: gossip, tax evasion, speeding, etc. We just want to go about our lives, making sure our own business doesn't get found out, and keep those smiles ready for plastering on our faces. But.....that's not what God has called us to do.

What if our congregations became known for openness, honesty, authenticity, intimacy? What if our churches became known for welcoming those whose lives are messy? Not just past messiness; but present, on-going, "help me work through my issues" messiness? What if pastors, elders, deacons, and church leaders created an atmosphere in their congregations that it is OK to show up with our messy lives and emotionally deficient baggage, assuring congregants that Father, both directly and through His people, can bring hope and healing to our dysfunction?

I would like to think that the early church that is described in the Acts passage above shared more with each other than just possessions. They did life together in its fullness, including the messy, and learned how to love each other in their messiness so much that they became known in the culture for their love of one another. And as we read in the epistles, there was often the messiness of church members that was addressed, even some publicly. There is no Scriptural support that the early church leaders ignored church member dysfunction, or pretended it didn't exist. It was acknowledged and dealt with. There was no provision for secret sins and issues being swept under the rug; no elephants in the living room not being addressed.

Then, what if it is our church leadership who paves the way with their own references of personal faults, fears and failures, and life challenges? We don't need to know every sordid detail of our leaders' stories, but our congregations do need to know our leaders are human with clay feet, just like the rest of us. Where did we ever get the notion that our pastors have to show themselves perfectly perfect, beyond sinning in thought, word, or deed? If we are going for authenticity and intimacy in our dealings within the Body of Christ, it must include our leaders. And if we ever expect to have any eternal effect on the unsaved, we must be seen as real and authentic people who know how to love, be humble, seek forgiveness, extend forgiveness, repent and worship, as we travel this journey of being conformed to the image of Jesus. The Church, in today's culture, is often seen and described as hypocritical, because our actions don't match up to what we preach. As a leader, I want those participants in my care at Abba's Delight to know that I am not above being tempted, even after almost 21 years into my recovery journey; that I can expect temptations as a part of everyday life as long as I'm following Jesus, and that it's OK to say "no" to those temptations; and that there are triggers I face regularly that I choose to bring into the light with trusted brothers who know me. They need to know that as long as I am in this body of flesh, I will be susceptible to attack. They need

to know I make mistakes in judgment, that I don't always show Father's love in the best ways possible, and that none of those shortcomings and sins will ever remove me from His loving care.

In my home church, we've been on a series over the last several weeks of being awakened—awakened to the leading of the Holy Spirit; awakened to opportunities to pray for various needs and in various situations; awakened to receiving fresh revelations of Jesus and His Kingdom from Father; awakened to encouraging each other; awakened to being willing to see things about myself that are not befitting a son of God, and being willing to go through a change process; awakened to, and participating in, whatever honors God. I long to see the Church be awakened to the myriads of possibilities in the Lord through authentic, intimate relationships within the Body, so that we are making disciples of Jesus, not merely filling seats to up the count to show how wonderful we are.

I realize that this whole concept bucks the system. I'm sure that there are church leaders who would fear for their positions by disclosing some of their "stuff," and that's a shame to think that someone who is working on their healing in an area would automatically be disqualified. Fear is often what made us go into hiding in the first place. Would that we could find a way to leave the fear behind, and love one another more perfectly, as that would drive away the fear.

[Responses From You](#)

From a Ministry Leader in CA: Hi Daniel, Thanks for continuing to send your newsletter. I always enjoy reading it! Your website looks great! Very well done!

From a Ministry Leader in OH: TERRIFIC website Daniel. Congratulations!

From a brother in Louisville: I love your website!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

From another brother in Louisville: Thanks for the update, Daniel!

Yet another brother in Louisville: Daniel, I think your website looks great, and very professional.

From another Ministry Leader in OH: Daniel, your new website looks great. So happy for you...

From a sister in Louisville: It looks amazing! I'm so thrilled! It looks great and is very user friendly. I know you have to be on cloud nine.

[Upcoming Ministry Meetings](#)

Overcomers Group: Thursday, December 5, 2013; Thursday, December 19, 2013

Family & Friends: Tuesday, December 10, 2013; Tuesday, December 24, 2013-CANCELLED

[Louisville Prayer Breakfast](#)

Every December, the Louisville Prayer Breakfast meeting is held at The Olmstead on Frankfort Avenue. The breakfast is hosted by Norton Healthcare. This year's featured speaker is Hal Heiner, well-known political figure here in Louisville. This year's meeting is on Wednesday, December 4th. Doors open at 7:00am; the breakfast line begins at 7:30; the meeting starts at 8:00, and we are finished by 9:00. If you would like to attend, please let me know ASAP, as the count needs to be in by this coming Saturday, Nov 30th. There is no charge!

The "regular" monthly meetings are different. They are held at the Ramada Inn on Zorn Avenue in Louisville near the water tower. They are held on the first Wednesday of each month, and the cost for these meetings is \$6.00 for the continental breakfast. Everyone is welcome to attend, and no reservation is required; just show up.

[Ongoing Prayer Requests](#)

Please pray that Father will continue to bring to Abba's Delight those who are ready to surrender themselves to His Lordship in their overcoming journey, and for family/friends impacted by homosexuality so that they can receive support and growth in their own journey with the Lord. Please pray that the Lord will open up doors of invitation to speak to church staff and congregations so that the message of freedom can reach the Body of Christ. Our churches have yet to realize how vital the Lord's message through Abba's Delight is.

Please pray for continued financial support for Abba's Delight. Donations from individuals, churches' missionary fund giving, businesses, and organizations are all welcomed and needed (both one-time and monthly commitments) to continue providing ministry to those in crisis. And your gifts are tax-deductible with Abba's Delight's 501(c)3 status.

Please plan to include Abba's Delight in your end-of-year charitable giving. These are tax-deductible contributions! They can be sent to the address at the top of your newsletter.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

If you do not wish to receive the Abba's Delight Ministry Newsletter any longer, please let me know. If you do wish to continue to receive it, please be certain to put our email address in your address book, so that this mailing does not go to your spam, and report to your carrier. Thank you.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 24-25