

Clinging to the Vine: Leading in Brokenness

by Jen Pinkner

A few years ago, God led me through a time of brokenness. My father was struggling through the latter stages of Parkinson's disease and my husband was going through a hard time that affected me in all areas. I had a full plate of leading a small group and a job that was highly relational. I was also trying to carry out responsibilities to help with my father and mother, in addition to figuring out this new phase of marriage.

My circumstances were not changing for the better, if not getting worse, and all I had to garner strength from was my time with God in His word and prayer. I met with Him daily and established a pattern of self-examination, repentance and joy in Him. I learned for the first time that prayer was not about changing my circumstances. It was about clinging in joy to the Vine, the giver and sustainer of life.

During this time of brokenness, I continued to lead my small group. It was a scary thing because I was much more fragile. I had established a group in which the rapport was already built, but I really think I began to lead in a new way because I was so much more connected to God and His word. I was actually strengthened as a leader because I was clinging to God and depending upon Him instead of my own skills or personality or gifting. God was doing a work in me that produced growth and a perseverance that could only be from Him.

Was this time easy? Oh no. But, I did learn trust and joy in the midst of pain. I learned about authentically struggling without making my struggle the center of my life—Christ became the center. I am so thankful for that time because that pattern of connection with God continues in my life.

So many times in my life, I have tried to pour from an empty, dried up container only to spread the dust of death around instead of the life of the Spirit. I have learned that if I try to lead others, disconnected from my relationship with Christ, I set a tone in the group that is artificial and inorganic. The group simply becomes another sermon thrown at them instead of a place for the lives of real people to connect to a real God who gives real direction in His word.

Depending just on my gifting, I try to hand out advice instead of bearing with them and listening. If I am not being convicted of sin daily as I walk with God, I am quick to be critical of others or point to a legalistic fix instead of pointing to the gospel. Or, in other times, I might give cheap grace that does not see the depth and deadly effect of sin by simply trying to please others by making them feel better. These are all ways to waste the time in a small group.

As a leader, I am not an expert. A small group is simply not a task to fulfill or a group of people to "fix." A small group is an organism with individuals that grow individually and collectively. As a leader, I am there to foster spiritual growth and community in others, and I cannot ask individuals or a group to grow where I do not grow myself.

What makes a good small group leader? The first thing is a growing, wrestling, struggling, real relationship with the One who transforms me into the likeness of Christ because that is the only hope for me as the leader and group as a whole.

How do I foster that relationship practically day in and day out? I spend time in God's word daily in study and not just a devotional thought. It is through the truth of His word that my heart is intersected. Only through that truth am I made aware of how places in my life are in direct opposition to God. In the light of His word, I take time to examine my heart in relationship to God and others and follow Him by repentance and obedience.

Again, I cannot ask the group to examine and grow if I am not practicing this in my own life. I want to lead in realities and not theories. I also take time to pray for the group as a whole and individually. I may plant and water to some extent, but it is the Spirit who grows them and brings fruit. As I learn dependence on Christ, I teach them that through my life.

As a leader, I am called to live a life of struggle, growth and authenticity just as I pray my group does. It is not about fancy methods of growth strategies, but it is about a life that clings to The Vine of Jesus Christ, our very hope.

From smallgroupexchange.com



Care Mection

Life group prayer and praise

- My grandma, **Deena Jamison** went in for heart surgery last Monday, please pray for healing and God's will, she is 78 and is not well. ~ **Sherra Ellis**
- Thank you, **Pastor Brian**, for the wonderful sermon on Sunday, we need this message today, I am the only one that changes my attitude. ~ **Arlene Olson**
- I would like continued prayer for my mom. **Barbara Albert** (in Idaho) she is still in the hospital, now in Boise for wound healing. Pray for progress in healing the bowels (small hole). ~**Dixie and Jim Burgess**
- **Naomi Long** asks that we pray for her back, it is painful when she gets on and off the bus. She also asks that we pray for **Linda, Jerry and her sister Dot**.
- Please pray for our daughter, **Nichole**, she is fighting a urinary tract infection, pray for healing and comfort. ~**Wendy and Doug R.**
- **My mom** has been diagnosed with advanced lymphoma and given weeks to live. Please pray for peace for her and for our family in this difficult time. ~ **Kim Edwards**
- **Darcy Stanyo** asks that we pray for her schooling and that she continues to stay on the path. She would also like us to pray for her child support that the paper work would come through quickly and that there would be no more snags.
- Please pray for our son **Alex**, he went into Denny Youth Center for 27 days. ~ **Paul Abbit**
- **Please pray for Karla Signs**, she is having some medical problems, lots of headaches from blood on the brain, please pray that God will heal her and relieve her headaches. ~ **Sandra Signs**
- I have cancer and would like prayer for a cure. Thanks, **Annette Kerby**

The office will
be closed
Thursday,
Nov. 26th

November 25th, **Marvin Pickard, Amy VanDalen**
November 26th, **Jason Armstrong, Terri Day, Cindy Linari, Edra Richardson**
November 27th, **Ross Johnson**
November 29th, **Jill Kinsman**
November 30th, **Donna Sorenson**
December 1st, **Lori Cain, Judy Frazier, Brian Harpell, Barb Olson**

Happy Birthday



Pray for our Military

- *Jonathan Michaels Estrella— son of Sharon Boswell.*
- *Jason Bjazevich—Megan Owenby's husband—Army Special Forces— Stationed in N. Carolina.*
- *Joel Ellis—son of John & Midge — Serving in Iraq.*
- *Scott Harpell—son of Brian & Lynne— Stationed at Fort Bragg.*
- *Aaron Weston—nephew of Ken and Kathy—Stationed in San Diego.*
- *Eric Schmidt — son of Gene and Pat Schmidt — Camp Fallujah, Iraq.*
- *Benjamin Lagonia—dear friend of the Naylor family—stationed in Manitoba.*
- *David Coyle—son of Karen Mark— residing in Seattle, member of the National Guard.*
- *Adam Flynn—a young Marine safely home and out of military.*
- *Brett Love—grandson of Wilma— Army National Guard—Serving at home.*
- *Robin Swartz - Serving in the military - currently home in Everett.*
- *Christian Chmielewski—nephew of JoAnn Couturie' - in the Marines.*
- *ENS Andrew E. Timpner (fiancé to Christin Suthard) on deployment with USS Momsen.*
- *Devin Abbitt—nephew of Paul Abbitt - Marine, stateside.*
- *Doug Baer—a teacher at Kamiak HS heading to Iraq in the Army Reserves—thru Sept. 09.*
- *Duane Neyens—brother to Kathy Chapman—Nat. Grd. Afghanistan.*
- *Philip Ankney-LCPL Afghanistan Cousin of MaryAnn Peterson.*
- *Jeffrey Lillard—son of Barbara Lillard — Srg. In Army, Stationed in Afghanistan.*
- *Aaron Chmielewski—joined the Marines. Nephew of JoAnn Couturie.*



Life Group Happenings

All in the Family



by *florence miller*

All of us lost a dear friend when **Cliff Hudspeth** left his earthly home for his permanent, loving, pain-free life with our Lord. His memorial is this coming Sunday at 3:00 pm. Our love goes out to **Lois** as we support her in this very difficult time.

Did you happen to read the Herald's Seems Like Yesterday column several weeks ago about **Darlene and Brian Hegeberg**? (I know-- you've already thrown those papers away!) Under the heading, 50 Years Ago was the following: "Recently married were Darlene Ann Thompson and Brian L. Hegeberg. The Rev. Carlton Goodwin performed the ceremony at Everett's First Baptist Church. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B.E. Niebergall of Everett and he was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Hegeberg of Marysville. June Ramstad sang, accompanied by her daughter Catherine.

Karla Signs is waiting for a referral for her to be sent to the Mayo Clinic in Arizona. Her pain is still a 10. The neurosurgeon has diagnosed her as having Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension in the top of her skull. There are two courses of treatments: shunts or shaving some of her skull. Of course she is hoping for shunts. Prayer is needed! We just received word that her referral is on the way.

We just got word on Tuesday that **Betty Resseguie** went into the hospital and is having a gall bladder surgery. She talked to the pastors on Tuesday afternoon and wasn't in as much pain as she had been. We will keep you updated on her condition when we find out more. Please pray for her.

We received a card from the **Manus and Meagher families** thanking the family at FBC for the sympathy and prayers for **Louis Manus**. They said that it was a comfort to them to know that they (**Frances and Louis**) were both so loved and at home here at First Baptist.

Thank You FBC Family !

Operation Christmas Child was very successful this year.

We collected 177 shoeboxes which are on their way to children around the world.

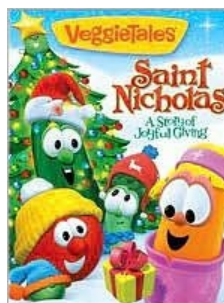


OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD – FBC filled 177 shoe boxes! Thank you! Your shoe boxes were packed up and sent on their way to the distribution center in Santa Ana, California where they'll be sorted and put on flights to all parts of the world! Thanks to ALL of YOU who helped us make this year's program such a success. Watch next year for announcements about our 2010 shoe box program – and ... begin saving your shoe boxes now for next year's program.



PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AND MOVIE NIGHT! Friday, December 4th, 7-9 pm. Veggie Tales: **"Saint Nicholas a Story of Joyful Giving."**

Join us as we make special Christmas craft and share cookies & apple cider. A signup sheet is in the Preschool wing beginning Sunday, November 15th or email Christen at preschool@fbc-everett.net



Lifegroup Contributing Opportunities

Update November 22nd, 2009

Adult attendance: 199 Children: 9 am: 30+11 10:30 am 49+15

Youth Small Group: Middle School 13+4

High School 11+3

ADVENT DECORATORS NEEDED! We are ready to begin getting the Worship Center and Pacific Room ready for the Advent season. Decorating days are **Friday, November 27th** and **Saturday, November 28th** beginning at 10 am with lunch provided. Please contact Ruelyn Nelson for more information.



It's A Wonderful Improvised Life

by Taproot Theatre Comedy Improv

**Sunday
December 13th
4:00 and 7:00 pm**

Tickets \$5.00 each or 4 for \$15.00

Presented by First Baptist Church
1616 Pacific Ave
Everett, WA
425.259.9166



USHER CAPTAIN 2009:

November- Ron & Kay Olson
Craig Reisen
December—Darrell Olson
Marc Owenby

COFFEE HOUR 2009

November 29th
Karl Durham
Faith Builders
December 6th
Laura Oversvee
Women of Purpose
December 13th
Marty Visser
Sunday AM
December 20th
Florence Miller
Women of Purpose
December 27th
Kay Olson
Home Fellowship

Upcoming Events:

THANKSGIVING SERVICE: Join us November 25th at 7pm in the Cascade Room. Bring your offering of gloves, stocking hats, blankets and sleeping bags for our Friday Night Street Ministry.

Please join our Seniors of SAM for a Christmas preparation Music Program on Friday, December 4th at 1:30 pm in our festively decorated Sanctuary. The organ prelude will set the mood and the program to follow will include the SAM singers singing about the joys of Christmas and Gene Dobson's dramatic presentation of the Christmas story. Do invite your friends and neighbors!

COMING DECEMBER 6—RMMO OFFERING: The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering is coming, Sunday, December 6th. This is an annual ABCUSA offering that provides Thank You checks to over 3,000 retired American Baptist ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses. Our goal is \$1600.00.

Remember with love... Give with gratitude

GOT SOAP? FBC Street Ministry serves hot meals to those in need every Friday night. We need your help with this vital outreach. Won't you join us in *Caring for our Community?* To find out how you can contribute to this ministry, contact Janet Tracy.

Howdy! Do you feel industrious? Are you artistic? The train man is looking for a few good people who want to serve the Lord and have fun at the same time. Please call, The Trainman (Leo Younglowe,) or the church office, 425-259-9166.