



## WORDS FROM *Pastor Randy*

Perhaps you've heard about the men who were onboard a leaky old ship. They were out in the middle of a stormy sea unsure if it would sink or sail. One of them went to see the captain and asked, "Captain, are we safe?" He answered, "Well, the boilers on this ship are very weak and may explode at any moment." "The ship is very old, and she's taking on water, and may sink at any moment." He then added, "[The way I see it, we may go up or we may go down, but at any rate, we are going on.](#)"

Each New Year brings with it the possibility of going up or going down. Regardless of which one happens, we must go on. Life is never still for very long. It's a lot like riding a bicycle; if you don't go on, you will go off! You've got to keep moving. There's little time to be idle. "Lead, follow, or get out the way" the bumper sticker says.

January 1 provides a great opportunity to start all over and begin again in some things that really matter. I'm not so big on New Year's resolutions. I think it takes far more than just a big "1" on the calendar to bring about real change in our lives. However; realistically, there's always room for improvement. We must determine to make progress rather than excuses.

Here are some ways I think we can "go on" in a new year. I'm proposing 4 realistic goals for every member to consider in 2011:

### **1. Read through the New Testament by April 1**

There are 260 chapters in the New Testament. By reading only 3 chapters each day beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup>, you will have read through the entire New Testament by April 1<sup>st</sup>!

For some who have never read through any portion of your Bible, this will be a great way to start. In only 3 months, you will have read through the New Testament. If Bible reading becomes a new habit for you this year, you won't stop with the New Testament!

### **2. Set a personal attendance goal for the year 2011**

Missing church gets easier the more you do it. Excuses get easier to find. Trips get easier to take. Before you know it, you're missing Sunday School & Sunday night church on a regular basis. Many of us will probably be shocked when we learn how many Sundays we were absent from church in the year 2010. How many of our absences would be "excused" by the Lord?

Why not set a goal by determining not to miss any more than say 4 or 5 Sundays this year? Rather than seeing how many Sundays you can miss, determine to be at church every time you possibly can be.

### **3. Increase my overall giving by 1%**

As Christians, we believe that God owns everything and all that we have has been given to us by God. We believe that the Bible teaches us to give 10% of our income to our church to support its ministries. Many among us have been practicing tithing for many years and are confident of God's blessings on their income. There are others who want to be obedient, but aren't sure where to start.

Here's a workable solution: Start where you are and determine to increase it each year. Faithful giving is our response to our faithful God. Giving is our act of worship. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt 6:21). Your church needs your financial gifts to continue doing what it does. But the focus is not on the church's need to receive, but on our need to give.

### **4. Get involved somewhere doing ministry in my church**

Participation is always the key at church. The "80-20 rule" is true in most organizations and sadly so at church. That is that 20% of the people do 80% of the work, and the other 80% do 20% of the work. Your church needs 100% participation. We'll never be what God wants us to be as a church until speculation becomes participation.

We are going to put a link on our church web site where you can go online and take a "Spiritual Gifts Test." This will help you to know what God has uniquely gifted you to do and help you to recognize your strengths and build on them.

To be honest, the best way to find out what God wants you to do is to simply get busy serving somewhere. By experience, we start to develop interests and increase passion toward what God wants us to be involved in.

Good goals are great. Let's get rid of whatever it is that's holding us back or making us stop. Remember, everybody who ever arrived had to start where they were. And then there's that old saying, "When you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time." And yes, the best time of the day is right now!

Wishing you a wonderful New Year,

Pastor Randy