

JANUARY 21, 2024 SUNDAY - DAY 14

PRAY THAT WE WOULD BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER

EPHESIANS 4:32

In a school classroom, the teacher gave an essay assignment. The students were to look at the famous piece of art, "The Spirit of '76." You may remember it. Three men are marching, one with a drum, One with a fife, and one with a bandage around his head. One boy wrote: "The Spirit of '76' is a painting of three men. One of them is beating a drum; one of them is blowing a horn; and the other one has a headache.



BECOMING KIND

In this day of much drum beating and horn blowing, we need to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving. One of the first verses many of us learned was, "Be kind to one another." The verse literally says, "Become kind," suggesting that it may be a matter of growth and attainment. We are not kind by nature. We must become kind. "Kind" means "full of benign courtesy" "the disposition of mind which thinks as much of its neighbor as it does of its own" "thoughtful consideration." Kindness looks outward, not inward. "Tenderhearted" connotes compassion and warm sympathize love.

"Forgiving" speaks of grace, and is built one the same word as grace unmerited favor. We are to offer undeserved forgiveness, just as we are undeserving of Jesus' forgiveness toward us.

Forgive as in the parable of the two debtors (Luke 7:32). In one sentence, Paul lays down the law of personal relationships. Treat others as Jesus has treated us. The Greek word for kindness carries an added dimension that the English does not convey. It means not only gracious and pleasant, but there is an element of usefulness as well. As Max Lucado relates in his book *A Love Worth Giving*, kindness is both pleasant and practical. Jesus not only attended the wedding at Cana, He salvaged it. He did more than acknowledge Zacchaeus. He blessed him with his presence in his home.

Kindness in our churches not only sympathizes with the needy and hurting, but also it seeks to relieve the hurt and meet the need. Kindness is not only opens the door for the elderly, but also it makes sure the church is handicapped accessible. Kindness not only smiles at the toddlers, but also it makes sure that the rooms are environmentally safe and that policies are in place to protect them from predators. Kindness not only pray for the sick, but also it provides rubber gloves for nursery workers, policies for disease control, and health insurance for staff members.

KINDNESS AS RESPECT

In the aftermath of the shooting at Wedgwood Baptist Church, our church was treated with respect and courtesy by the press. As far as we know, not a single adverse article or interview came out in the media. This seemed so contrary to what so many others have experienced with what seems to be an anti Christian bias in the media. We believe the difference was that God led us, in the midst of our grief and shock, to treat the press with respect and kindness. As the Pastor was waiting to be interviewed on one of the major networks, he heard one of the commentators say that they had received e mails and calls criticizing the media for making a living off other people's tragedies.

We thought, how unfair to "shoot the messenger." Our nation depends on a free and active press. Reporters and interviewers universally offered their services to us. "If there's anything we can do, please let us know." So after the interview, the Pastor asked for a favor. "Sure! Anything!" He asked if they would allow him to pray for them. Then they joined hands the interviewers, the soundmen, the cameraman,

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and the Pastor and he prayed for them. He asked God to protect them from harm and temptation while they were away from their families. He asked God to protect them from editors who would twist the truth of their interview into misleading sound bites. And he prayed that they would come to know Christ, who gave us hope in our hour of need. When he finished, many were wiping tears. All expressed their gratitude. And no one bashed us. All it took was a little kindness.

Pray that we would be kind to one another.

**And be kind to one another,
Tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
Just as God in Christ has forgiven you.
Eph. 4:32**

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Pray that God would increase your kindness quotient toward the members of your church and toward the lost.
2. Ask God to show you specific people for whom you might show love and kindness both gracious courtesy and practical usefulness.
3. Pray that God would open the eyes of your church for systemic changes that convey an attitude of kindness to others.
4. Spend time alone recalling all the various acts of kindness others have shown to you and then give God thanks.

The concept of submission is central to Christianity, one enters the kingdom by faith in and submission to Jesus Christ.

God give us churches where Christ is in charge and people are in the habit of submitting to one another.

