

JANUARY 12, 2024 FRIDAY - DAY 5

PRAY THAT WE WOULD GREET ONE ANOTHER

ROMANS 16:16, 1 CORINTHIANS

16:20, 1 PETER 5:14

The article told of Kimberly Livingston, age thirty nine who had died two months earlier. For fifty nine days, officials waited for someone to claim her body before burying her in an unmarked grave.

Overheard in an area funeral home as a couple came out of a viewing room, "I can't believe no one else came." How tragic to be unclaimed and unwanted in death. How much more tragic to be unnoticed and uncared for in life.

EARLY CHURCH EXAMPLES

Three different New Testament churches received instruction related to this type of one anothering. Paul sent a greeting to Priscilla and Aquila and to the church that met in their house (Rom. 16:3 - 5), and then for the next few verses listed twenty six names and descriptions of mostly unknown people. These names represent a diverse church, transcending race, culture, and gender.

THE LIST INCLUDES

- The first Asian convert
- Many women
- A countryman of Paul
- One with a Roman name
- One with an imperial household name
- One from Jewish nobility
- One whose name meant "Persian woman"
- Some with common slave names

All were to be greeted. None were to be ignored because of their differences. (For the other two examples, see 1 Corinthians 16:20 and 1 Peter 5:14.)

A HOLY KISS

The admonition to "greet one another" was a part of their worship. Justin Martyr, describing Christians

of the second century wrote, "When we have ceased from our prayers, we mutually salute one another by a kiss, and then we bring forward the bread and the cup." Their method was "a holy kiss," or as other translations say, "salute one another." The Phillips translation offers a British slant, "Have a hearty handshake all around." Some of us used to sing, "Shake another hand, shake the hand next to you." This is a good example of principle and method. The principle is to "greet one another."

The method is "with a holy kiss." Principles are biblical and timeless. Methods are cultural and temporal. There are other examples of this principle/method idea. In Acts 2, Peter was preaching in a loud voice. He had to do so because there was no amplification system. The principle was to proclaim the gospel. The method was with a loud voice.

A "holy kiss" is different from a passionate kiss or even an affectionate kiss. All participated, even men with women with women. This command is repeated at least five times in the New Testament. We would do well to take it seriously. Biblical examples of a "holy kiss" may be found in.

- Luke 15:20 - Father and prodigal son
- Acts 20:37 - "They wept aloud and embraced Paul and kissed him"
- 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12 - "Greet one another with a holy kiss"
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16 - "Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss"
- 1 Peter 5:14 - "a holy kiss of love"

So often our modern methods of greeting one another are cavalier and insincere. We ask, "How ya doin'?" but we don't really want to hear the answer. We have enough problems of our own. Even our customs of shaking hands arose from fear and guardedness. In medieval times one's right hand was his sword hand, so to reach out and grip each others right hand was to ensure relatively safety,

For the moment, at least. The point is to be sure to greet and welcome one another warmly and sincerely.

LEON TROTSKY

After the Russian Revolution of 1905 was crushed by the Tsarist regime, one of the leaders, Leon Trotsky, fled the country for his life and eventually wound up in America

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He was confused, searching for meaningful answers, in need of direction. In this state of mind Trotsky decided to visit a Protestant church to see what Christianity was all about. As he arrived for Sunday school, he was received with cold, questioning stares because of his ragged clothes. His heavy accent proved to be even more of a barrier. No one greeted him or said a word to him. They turned their shoulders,

Cut their eyes, and refused to welcome him. The Sunday school teacher never arrived, but the lesson was clearly taught, for Trotsky, at least: Christianity is for well dressed, middle class white folks.

Several years later, he led the Bolshevik Revolution, and the world was never the same. How would Trotsky have been greeted in your church? Pray that we would greet one another.

Greet one another with an holy kiss, The churches of Christ greet you. Rom. 16:16

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Pray that God would open your eyes to the need to warmly welcome people into your church, and into your life.
2. Pray that God would greatly expand your circle of friends and your ability to reach out and develop meaningful relationships.
3. Pray that God would break up power cliques in your church that view visitors as a threat to the status quo.
4. Pray that God would show us how to assimilate new members into the life of the church.

If God is so courteous with us, Would it not behoove us to trust One another the same way and "wait for one another"?

Be patient as God works in our lives At different speeds in different ways.