

Faith Report

Relying Prayer

by Craig Garriott

"After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray."

Mark 6:46

I am always struck by the rhythm of prayer that is woven into the gospel accounts. Even the activist apostle Peter, who is always on the move, took note of Jesus' getaways with His father. Peter, the storyteller for Mark's gospel, tells us that as Jesus' ministry was heating up He would excuse himself to be with His Father. A famished crowd of more than 5,000 had been following Jesus. He was moved to gut-wrenching compassion because they were like sheep without a loving shepherd. He fed them, sent them home, and sent his disciples across the lake towards Bethsaida. Then He went up on a mountainside to pray.

Why did Jesus go *up* the mountain to pray? He had already sent everybody away. Why didn't he remain down by the lake? Wasn't that as good a place as any? Sure. We don't know why, but when you go someplace higher than where you are, you get a better perspective. Henri Nouwen says,

"Why is it so important that you are with God and God alone on the mountaintop? It's important because it's the place in which you can listen to the voice of the One who calls you the beloved. To pray

is to listen to the One who calls you "my beloved daughter," "my beloved son," "my beloved child." To pray is to let that voice speak to the center of your being, to your guts, and let that voice resound in your whole being." ("Moving from Solitude to Community to Ministry" by Henri Nouwen)



He's right. We need to get alone with God on the mountain to hear His voice because so many pressures pull at us, so many voices clamor for our attention, so many fears and anxieties seek to control us. Accusations seek to weaken us and temptations to seduce us. We need to hear the strong assuring voice of God to remind us that we are His beloved.

Jesus not only showed that discipline of grace in His own life but He incorporated it in His fellowship with the disciples. Earlier in Mark 6, Jesus had sent His former blue-collar fishermen, despised tax collector, anti-Roman militant disciples on a gospel-preaching, Word-and-deed mission to call strangers to repentance. Pretty exhilarating, hair raising and exhausting kind of odd work for such

men. But Jesus is the kind of shepherding coach who knows the best way to renew and restore his hard-working servant leaders. "...he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place." Mark 6:31, 32

I wonder what kind of words Jesus spoke to them? I'll bet they were similar to words Jesus heard from the mountaintop. "You are my disciples, my beloved ones.. I love you. I am so proud of you. With you I am well pleased."

Follower of Christ, exhausted servant, sin-struggling saint, Jesus is calling you, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Can you hear His assuring voice?

It is amazing that a poor human creature is able to speak with God's high Majesty in heaven and not be afraid. When we pray, the heart and the conscience must not pull away from God because of our sins and our unworthiness, or stand in doubt, or be scared away. When we pray we must hold fast and believe that God has heard our prayer...for this reason the ancients defined prayer as an Ascensus mentis ad Deum, "a climbing up of the heart unto God." ("What A Great Gift We Have in Prayer" by Martin Luther) ♦



**FAITH
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

505 E. 42nd Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: 410.323.0202
Fax: 410.435.5075
E-mail: fcfoffice@
fcchurch.org
www.fcchurch.org

*United that the
world would
know*

*²⁷All the ends of
the earth shall
remember
and turn to the
LORD,
and all the fami-
lies of the na-
tions
shall worship
before you.
Ps. 22:27*

**Annual Congregational
Meeting
7.30 p.m., January 18, 2012**

All are welcome to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting. The meeting is an opportunity to review what has been going on at Faith Christian Fellowship over the past year, and learn about future plans. Members will also have the opportunity to vote for candidates to the office of elder and deacon.

The Annual Ministry Report will be available on the church website at www.fcchurch.org. Please take some time in advance of the meeting to look it over.

Prior to the meeting, everyone is encouraged to enjoy fellowship over a pot luck supper at 6.30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Please bring a side dish, entrée, dessert or drink to share as well as serving utensils.

See you there! ♦

**Pray for Leadership
Candidates**

Please pray for the following men who are candidates for election to the office of elder and deacon:

- Geoff Lu—Elder
- Dan Ellis—Deacon
- Weldon Newton—Deacon

Candidate officer bios are available in the church lobby. ♦

Bits and Pieces

- Congratulations to new members Army and Jan Arnold, who were presented to the church in December. Welcome!
- We are sorry to say farewell to Tom and Kedi Milajecki and their two boys, Thomas and Andrew, who have moved to Florida. We will miss them!
- We give grateful thanks to Barnaby Wickham for his tireless service as Treasurer of FCF over the last nine years. Thank you Barnaby, and thank you Kate for your support.



CALENDAR	
Jan. 1	New Year's Day service 10 a.m.
Jan. 2	Church Office closed
Jan. 6	Concert of Prayer 7-8.30 p.m.
Jan. 16	Office closed for Martin Luther King holiday
Jan. 18	Annual Congregational Meeting 7.30 p.m.; Pot luck dinner 6:30 p.m.
Jan.21	Women's Prayer Breakfast, 8.30 a.m.