

November 28, 2021

# The View

*“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” – John 12:21*

---

## Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly “headquarters.” The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don’t understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God’s word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.  
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

---

## Schedule

### The Lord’s Day

**9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages**

*Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Letter to the **Philippians***

**10:30 AM: Assembly**

Preaching Today

*David Posey*

***Jesus on... the Love of God***

*Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>*

***Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 **Hebrews*****

***Bible Class @ 5 PM – A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)***

***Young People’s Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home***

**Middle school class: monthly** (contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

### Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

**Bible classes for all ages**

*Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Letter to the **Philippians***

---

## In This Issue

*Do We Really Need More Elders*, by Randy Clark, page 2

*The Declining Birthrate and Us*, by David Posey, page 3

*News & Information*, page 4

# Do We Really Need More Elders?

By Randy Clark

Folsom has six elders right now. Do we really need more? Will we be more effective, will we get more done, will we be a stronger congregation? Are these really the right questions we should be asking? James Garfield, the 20th President of the United States, said in his inaugural speech that he "...was stepping down from the highest office in the land to become the President of the United States." He was referring to his role as an elder in the church of Christ. Concerned Bible students probably will agree that that statement was accurate.

Despite all the turmoil in our country and world today about who has authority and how it should be used, Christians know that no greater responsibility rests on any man today than that which comes from the authority granted elders in the Lord's church. When great authority has been given to any person it increases opportunities for service,

temptations for self-exaltation and consequences for failure. Another way to put it is that possession of authority brings grave responsibility. The Hebrew writer makes the seriousness of this role very clear in chapter 13 verse 17.

The questions we should ask are: who should aspire to this lofty office? Who should step up to the challenges and responsibilities? God's word provides the answer, the only acceptable answer. The apostle Paul explained this to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1ff.) and Titus (Titus 1:5ff.). He details the reasons for this office and the kind of character these men must possess. Nowhere in scripture do we find a restriction on the number of elders a local church should have, other than there must be a plurality, more than one.

It's not the goal of this article to go into the qualifications in detail, but rather to try to inspire young men to prepare themselves for this grave responsibility. The Lord's desire is that His church prospers and grows. We cannot do this effectively without scripturally qualified elders. We live in a time when our culture and environment have taken on the role of deciding who has authority and determine how it should be used, even in church government. That has created confusion and conflict. God gave Israel a "kind of government" He wanted for her. When they followed and respected that form of government they prospered. When they didn't follow it, they ceased to prosper. When Christ established His church He gave us a "kind of government" He wanted for us. When we follow that form of government we prosper. When we don't follow it, we cease to prosper. Christ's form of government authorizes the elders

oversight of and responsibility for the spiritual health and growth of the local members. No one can steal or embezzle that role from them, and they cannot delegate that responsibility to others.

When elders properly and effectively exercise their responsibilities, the local church prospers. By almost any measure we choose to use, Folsom has prospered. That's not to say that the eldership is to take credit for the prosperity, that's the Lord's doing. But consider; membership has grown steadily since the church was established here in 1976; Folsom has had elders since 1979; the number of qualified Bible teachers has increased steadily; the buildings we meet in or have met in have been expanded three times to accommodate our physical growth; our financial situation has become stronger each year; we use more of the Lord's money for preaching the

gospel locally and supporting men who preach it around the country and the world than for anything else. The role of the elders is a God-given responsibility and authority to maintain His "kind of government" for the local church. And when properly and effectively carried out the Lord's church prospers, it's the Lord's

doing.

Back to the real question, who should aspire to this lofty office and who should step up to the challenges and responsibilities? The answer is any man who is concerned about the spiritual growth, health and prosperity of the Lord's church. And frankly, what man does that exclude? In the future we will look at the qualifications more carefully because the Holy Spirit was very careful to explain how a young man should prepare for service in the Lord's church. The instructions are profitable for every man, young or old, who is concerned about the prosperity of Christ's church. There is no way to know for certain the future of Christ's church in Folsom. As we have heard many times, "we are only one generation away from apostasy." The best way to avoid that is to have men who are prepared to accept the responsibilities and challenges of serving as elders. It is imperative that we help prepare future elders. And to that purpose, the current eldership is moving forward.

"It's not the goal of this article to go into the qualifications in detail, but rather to try to inspire young men to prepare themselves for this grave responsibility."

# The Declining Birth Rate and Us

By David Posey

When I was a junior in high school, my history teacher, Mr. Wall, liked to talk about everything other than history. Most of the time, that was fine with me. He was a little crazy, which made it more fun, but he also made ridiculous predictions. We could have called him “Mr. NotaNostradamus if we knew who Nostradamus was at the time.

In one of his more memorable prophecies, Mr. Wall said that in less than 50 years from then (1964) the world would be so populated, that each individual in the world would have only a 3 ½ foot square to stand on. He said it with such earnestness that, as a 16 year old kid listening to an older, self-proclaimed prophet, it made an impression on me and I thought about it for years after I graduated.

His prediction was extreme but he made it when Baby Boomers like me were multiplying.

God told Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28) and married couples were taking that seriously in the 1960s. Cities were building schools as quickly as possible and they were filling them up.

Fast forward to today. Several articles have appeared this week on the decline of the birth rate in America. Here are some recent headlines:

US birth rate falls 4% to its lowest point ever – *BBC News*

The U.S. Birthrate Has Dropped Again – *NY Times*

Declining American Birth Rate Unlikely to Bounce Back – *Business Insider*

In addition, there is a growing number of young people who do not plan to have children at all. The November 26<sup>th</sup> issue of *Culture Translator* (a publication of *Axis*) had this to say:

Is the world too bleak to plan a family? Young people seem to think so, in increasing numbers. Data published by the Pew Research Center shows that 44 percent of people 18 to 49 who don't have kids yet say it's unlikely they will ever have children, which is a jump of 7 percent. Both men and women were equally likely to report an intent to remain childless, with many citing financial or medical concerns. With fertility rates continuing to decline in the United States, it feels like a “baby bust” of empty kindergarten classrooms is on the horizon. While the reasons for this are complicated and deeply rooted in individual choice, the growing “child-free” movement mixed with climate anxiety, financial insecurity, and getting married later in life all make family planning more fraught with confusion than it was for previous generations.

To some degree, this reflects what has occurred here in the Folsom church. For several years, we had a spot in the News section of this publication reserved for couples who were expecting. On occasion, there were at least 10 on the list and rarely did the number fall to less than 5. I would

receive emails from a young couple with “*For the View*” in the subject line and I knew exactly what it was referring to: an announcement that they were expecting. This went on for years. The result is that, at one point, we had over 130 children here, from newborns to high schoolers. In the last 3-4 years, we had over 40 in our high school class. That's changed and, while we've announced a few here and there in the past couple of years, we no longer have an “Expecting” heading in our news section.

I don't know if these two realities — a drop off in the national birth rate and fewer expectant parents here — have anything to do with each other. It may just be a

coincidence. We were blessed with a plethora of young marrieds starting about 25 years ago and that accounted for all the children that were born since then. Now, many of those their kids are in college. I hope that young Christians couples do not adopt the

notion that not having children is the way to go. At worst, that attitude can signal selfishness on the part of the couple or, more likely, it signals an honest fear of what the kids may face in this “twisted generation.” Of course, there may be other reasons for not having children. But that's not ideal. This is ideal (Psalm 128:1-3, 6a):

Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways!  
You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.  
Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table...  
...May you see your children's children!

For what it's worth, I can personally vouch for what the psalmist says here. Raising kids is tough; there are a lot of challenges. But if we had it to do all over again, we wouldn't hesitate. My only regret, actually, is that we didn't have one or three more. We were *strongly “encouraged”* by some of the adults in our life to stop at two and we dutifully complied. But looking back... never mind. We struggle against feeling resentment about that.

There is nothing greater than a home with little “olive shoots” around the table. Those families are blessed beyond words. But so are we all. Can you imagine life in the church here at Folsom without all of the precious children we have here? They bless us with their wide-eyed cuteness, curiosity and enthusiasm. Psalm 127:3-4 reminds us:

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,  
the fruit of the womb a reward.  
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior  
are the children of one's youth.

“Can you imagine life in the church here at Folsom without all of the precious children here? They bless us with their wide-eyed cuteness, curiosity and enthusiasm.”