

March 6, 2022

The View

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

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence.

We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.

“The six elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of 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 the preacher or 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

Auditorium: A Study of Paul’s Second & Third Journeys

Room 15/16: Raising Faithful Kids

Room 12: Young Adults Class

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today: David Posey

Jesus on... Justice

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

Bible Class @ 2:00 PM in room 12 on Judges

Bible Class @ 5 PM — A Study of Prayer in the Psalms (Auditorium)

Young Peoples’ 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 Second & Third Journeys

Room 15/16: Raising Faithful Kids

Room 12: Young Adults Class

Young People: Mark Your Calendar!

Boot Camp: April 29 — May 1

Theme: What a Friend!!

More information to come.

Respecting the Elders

BY ANDREW WESTPHAL

[I was reviewing some old Views and ran across this article by our late, dear friend and brother, Andrew Westphal. For those who don't know Andrew, he was like a son to us and to others. He died in April, 2016 at the age of 29. I really miss him.

At a meeting recently, the elders decided to write a few articles on aspects of the eldership. We've published at least three in the past few months. This unsolicited article was written by Andrew in January 2013. And yes, the article is long; see the sidebar on page 3.]

Imagine hearing of a congregation of the Lord's people who have been having some problems with some of its members and elders. On a recent Wednesday night after class some of the members approached one of the elders and had a heated discussion within earshot of many of the members. Some of the other members were disgruntled and mean-spirited towards both of the elders because they have recently talked about having two adult classes instead of one, and many of the members don't want to be separated for class. In addition to that, the elders received a lot of criticism after announcing they would be implementing group meetings, and many of the members did not want to feel obligated to attend yet another class.

Now imagine hearing a week later that both elders decided to step down. One man had enough. He was tired and weary from having to juggle work responsibilities and the stresses some of the members were imposing. However, because he didn't believe it would be right to leave the congregation, he felt it would be best to step down for now. This resulted in the other elder stepping down as well since the Bible only refers to elders in the plural. There is no scripture that suggests it would be approved by God to only have one elder serving. So now the congregation is left without elders. Last week it had two, now it has none.

Things continue to spiral downward for the church because of the lack of leadership and inability for many to agree. Sadly, the church ends up dwindling all the way down to just a few fami-

lies who now cannot afford to maintain the building they have met in for 20 years.

What went wrong? What could have prevented this? Obviously this is a hypothetical situation and hard to imagine happening here. But, theoretically, it could happen. With enough of a gradual decline of respect and godly attitude towards the men leading us, we could find ourselves in a situation where we are taking the wind out of the sails of these men. With an improper and sinful attitude we could cause our brothers to stumble in their responsibilities, or even decide to step down from them altogether.

Obviously we don't want this to happen. We want them to help lead us in unity and truth as a working body of Christ here in Folsom. We want to get to heaven, and we want them to get to heaven. Are we doing everything we can to ensure that? This is the godly attitude that we are expected to have towards the

elders: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Hebrews 13:17). Paul says to hold them in high regard in love because of their work (1 Thess. 5:13).

Are we mindful of their needs? Are we trying to help them serve their positions more effectively and efficiently in any way we can? Do we remember that they are not only trying to protect and lead us in our faithfulness to God, but that they are on the same journey themselves and want to get to heaven? There are a lot of questions we can and should ask ourselves.

In light of the elders' annual big meeting weekend, I started thinking about all the effort they put into shepherding this congregation. Then I started thinking about all those questions above. Then after reading through scripture about our responsibilities to our elders, I narrowed it down in my mind to one thing. The greatest respect we can show the elders is our desire to help them get to heaven. If we start with this attitude, the rest is simplified for us.

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Most of us have been around long enough to know we are commanded to “be subject to the elders” (1 Pet. 5:5). Because of the noble task they desire (1 Tim. 3:1) they should be considered worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17), especially those who serve as an elder and preach. We are also told to not make or listen to an accusation against an elder unless there are 2 or 3 witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19), and when physical or spiritual needs come about for us, we are to let them know (Jas. 5:14).

Considering how much each of us enjoy the benefits of the large body we have here in Folsom, perhaps we can look for new opportunities to do more in supporting the eldership in keeping us together and standing firm in truth. Considering the stresses and concern these seven men may have while making big decisions for this congregation of the Lord, maybe there are some encouraging words we can speak to them in passing at the assemblies to remind them we’re on board with them and appreciate their service to us and to God.

Again, the greatest thing we can do is be concerned for their spiritual well-being. With this attitude, it should be easier to submit to them without grumbling – which we shouldn’t be doing anyway (Phil. 2:14). Not burdening them with trivial matters and living at peace amongst ourselves (1 Thess. 5:13) should become easier when we’re concerned about the burden it could place on the elders.

If we truly want our elders to get to heaven, let’s make sure we aren’t giving them any reason to turn their willing desire to serve into a resentful or compulsive obligation. Let’s not force them to have to exercise the authority they have been given by the Lord to make decisions against our will because we are stubborn and don’t trust their wisdom and ability to lead according to the will of God. Nor should we give them any reason to grumble in their duties because Paul includes every person when he says, “Do all things without grumbling” (Phil. 2:14). And if we cause them to stumble and compromise the instruction they have received from the Lord in 1 Peter 2:2-3, we’ll have to give an account to God for that.

Each one of us is called to clothe ourselves with humility (1 Pet. 5:5). One way to explain Peter’s point in this passage is to say he’s trying to draw out the fact that we all depend on the blood of Christ in our hope of getting to heaven. And from a member standpoint, if we have this attitude and awareness of the greatest need these men have of leading us, then there shouldn’t be anything that gets in the way of us helping them do what they need to do to serve and honor God as a shepherd of His flock.

Excerpt from Andrew Westphal’s memorial, May, 2013

I appreciate the remarks of the men who have spoken earlier. Phil asked us to keep our remarks at 10-15 minutes, which is perfectly fine and makes sense. I have to laugh, though because if I was Andrew up here, whatever time was allotted to me, I would double it. He became famous around here — he was the wide receiver of preachers and *he would always go long*. I was fine with it; it made my sermons seem short...

But let me tell you why he did that. Shortly after he moved back here, we asked him to preach; it was supposed to be a 15-20 minute sermon and he went about 40. He told me later that as he looked out at all the friendly faces, people that he had known and loved for so long, that he just couldn’t stop. So, he went on and on...and on. Why? Because he loved us and being up here was an opportunity to try to help a lot of people whom he loved get to heaven.

That attitude led to him entering our preacher training program in late 2011. We worked together for about a year and a half. Terry Raposa said, “it was bad day for the devil when Andrew decided to preach the gospel” and I agree. He loved people and just wanted to help them get to heaven.

That was a great time in my life that I’ll always treasure. Andrew was special to me... like a son. We spoke multiple times every day, mostly by email. I counted 1127 emails, including one on December 22, 2012 at 3 AM when he told me of his engagement to Sharria. That doesn’t include the texts, phone calls, or meetings. We taught classes together, talked “shop” (a lot) It was a great time in my life and he helped me as much as I helped him. Probably more.

David Posey