

Planning for Prime Time Day 2006

by Derl Keefer



A dramatic transformation is occurring in the population of the USA. The population now has more prime timers than teenagers. In his book, *The Graying of the Flock*, Dr. James L. Knapp states some other interesting facts:

- Americans over the age of 65 are the fastest growing segment of the population.
- Those over the age of 65 are increasing twice as fast as the population as a whole.
- Between 1960-1990 those over the age of 85 increased 232 percent.
- Those over the age of 100 have doubled in the last ten years.*

We are an aging nation and an aging church. But there is good news! This new generation of senior adults brings to our churches talents, experiences, resources, time, and the desire to serve God. They have been called the “Pacesetter Generation” for good reason. These prime timers Adults offer faith, compassion, love, hope, and service to a hurting and needy world.

Nazarene churches across the USA will honor prime time adults and grandparents day the first Sunday after Labor Day, September 10, 2006. This day has several purposes:

- To honor grandparents
- To give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children’s children
- To help children become aware of the strength, wisdom, and guidance older people can offer
- To offer the church an opportunity to honor prime time adults for their tireless efforts over the years to establish a spiritual foundation, to thank them for their present spiritual contributions in time, talent, and treasures, and to celebrate the future.

Thank You Ideas for Prime Time Day

Your church can express appreciation to these wonderful individuals in a variety of ways:

- Children’s classes can adopt prime timers and make thank you cards to present to them.
- Take time in Sunday School and worship service to honor prime timers publicly.
- Host a breakfast, after glow, or tea to honor prime timers.
- Honor your prime time adults with a Sunday luncheon. Ask adult classes to provide a pot luck lunch. Recruit teens work as servers. Ask children’s classes to perform skits or songs.
- Invite prime timers to the altar. Ask the congregation to surround them for a special time of prayer.
- Organize a group to visit shut-ins during the week either prior to or after September 10. Take pictures of the visit to display on a bulletin board or present as a PowerPoint.
- Schedule a prime time adult choir or ensemble to sing during the worship service.

- Sponsor a prime time revival. Emphasis the evangelism of prime time adults. Schedule the services to begin or culminate on Prime Time Day.
- Plan a week long celebration with a special emphasis or activity each day.

Don't miss this opportunity to express appreciation to the prime time adults for their years of service to the kingdom.

* James L. Knapp, *The Graying of the Flock* (Orange, CA: Leafwood Publishers, 2003), 11.

Order of Worship – Traditional

2006 Prime Time Day – Service for a Lifetime

Instrumental Prelude: Hymn #455 “Take My Life and Let It Be”

Call to Worship: “Praise Him, All His Servants” (Psalm 134:1-2, 148:13-14)

Worship and Praise:

Hymn #455 “Take My Life and Let it Be”

Hymn #544 “Come All Christians, Be Committed”

“With All My Heart” (Word Music, Babbie Mason, 1990)

Prayer of the Community: Prime Time member

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:1-11 (NIV)

Song of Response: “Praise You” (New Spring Publishing, Elizabeth Goodine, 1993)

Passing of the Peace: Led by a Prime Time member

Drama Sketch: Prime Time actors or other church drama group

(*The Greatest*, Rusty Rhodes; *Cities, Kings, Weeping, and Things*, Gail Blanton; *On Holy Ground*, Larry and Annie Enscoe)

Testimony of Service: Prime Time member

Tithes and Offerings: Instrumental Offertory, Prime Time member(s)

Ministry in Music: “The Servant Song” (Scripture in Song, Richard Gillard, 1976)

Good News: “Service for a Lifetime” (John 13:1-17)

Closing Prayer: Prime Time member

Benediction: Senior Pastor

Instrumental Postlude: “Praise You” (New Spring Publishing, Elizabeth Goodine, 1993)

(Hymns from “Sing to the Lord” Hymnbook, Lillenas Publishing)
(Worship and praise songs can be found on the CCLI website www.ccli.com)
(Drama sketches can be downloaded at www.lillenasdrama.com)

Order of Worship – Contemporary

2006 Prime Time Day – Service for a Lifetime

Instrumental Prelude: “Everyday” (Hillsong Publishing, Joel Houston, 1999)

Call to Worship: “Praise Him, All His Servants” (Psalm 134:1-2, 148:13-14)

Worship and Praise:

“Everyday” (Hillsong Publishing, Joel Houston, 1999)
“These Hands” (Emack Music, Jeff Deyo, 2000)
“You’re Worthy of My Praise” (Maranatha Praise, David Ruis, 1991)

Prayer of the Community: Prime Time member

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:1-11 (*The Message*)

Song of Response: “Humble King” (Vineyard Songs, Brenton Brown, 1999)

Passing of the Peace: Led by a Prime Time member

Drama Sketch: Prime Time actors or other church drama group
(*The Greatest*, Rusty Rhodes; *Cities, Kings, Weeping, and Things*, Gail Blanton; *On Holy Ground*, Larry and Annie Enscoe)

Testimony of Service: Prime Time member

Tithes and Offerings: Instrumental offertory by Prime Time member(s)

Ministry in Music: “The Potter’s Hand” (Hillsong Publishing, Darlene Zschech, 1997)

Good News: “Service for a Lifetime” (John 13:1-17)

Closing Prayer: Prime Time member

Benediction: Senior Pastor

Instrumental Postlude: “The Potter’s Hand” (Hillsong Publishing, Darlene Zschech, 1997)

(Worship and praise songs can be found through the CCLI website www.ccli.com)
(Drama sketches can be downloaded at www.lillenasdrama.com)

Upcoming Prime Time Day Themes

2006 Service for a Lifetime
2007 Faith for a Lifetime
2008 Holiness for a Lifetime

Sermon Suggestion

Service for a Lifetime
by Derl G. Keefer

Scripture: John 13:1-17

The customs of the day required that the feet of guests be washed before a meal. This ritual was usually performed by the lowest ranking servant of the household. On this night, Jesus presented a picture of servanthood. The scene before dinner might have gone something like. . .

Peter glared at Judas after they entered the upper chamber of the house where they were to celebrate Passover with Jesus. After all, it was Judas’ responsibility as the treasurer to make the proper arrangements, including a servant on duty ready with a basin of water to wash the dirt off their feet and a towel to dry them. But oh, no, Judas had overlooked his duty.

Peter thought to himself, “What’s wrong with Judas? Where is his mind lately? He’s been acting so strangely.” It seemed to Peter that Judas had been distracted the last couple of days. Not to take care of this arrangement was an insult to Jesus and the rest of the men. Nose to nose with Judas, Peter sharply asked, “Who’s going to take the servant’s place now? I’m sure not!” Judas retorted, “Well, you don’t expect me to do it, do you?” None of the twelve volunteered as they grudgingly took their places around the table with dirty

feet. Would the argument about who was the greatest among them from earlier in day continue into the evening?

Quietly and unpretentiously Jesus went to the basin and poured water into the bowl. He wrapped the towel around His waist and walked to the first of the disciples. Kneeling, He washed and dried the feet of a disciple. To redefine greatness for all who were seated piously around the table, He demonstrated servanthood to them. He then challenged them with his statement, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15).

Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*, noted we would prefer to hear the challenge of Jesus to deny our relationship with our parents or sell all our houses and lands for the sake of the gospel than to wash someone’s feet! Where is the greatness in that proposal? Radical self-denial gives the feeling of adventure with glory attached! But washing feet? That is like being banished to the mundane, the ordinary, or the trivial life.

Jesus brings into the world a different mindset on “greatness.” He said, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. . .even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Matthew 20:25-28). Greatness in Christ’s dictionary is not defined as authority or position, but by the use of a towel and basin.

I. The objective of a servant.

- A. A servant is one who takes orders.
- B. A servant is one who deciphers orders and fulfills them.
- C. A servant is one who obeys orders.
- D. A servant is one who lives every day in conformity to God’s will.

We choose to be a servant as we surrender our lives to become both available and vulnerable. There is a cessation of manipulation and self control of life as we become open to the direction God desires to take us. The tell tale sign of servant style living is not position or power, but the humility of the basin and the towel.

II. The traits of a servant.

Charles Swindoll stated, “Who, me a servant! You gotta be kidding!” All of us have been called to be a servant. Jesus’ sermon, called the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12), portrays the identity of a true servant of God. They open the door to significance of life through Christ and bring peace and happiness.

- A. “Poor in Spirit” means unvarnished humility. Without Christ our life is one of spiritual bankruptcy, deserving of nothing. Turning to Almighty Holy God in total trust brings spiritual wealth.
- B. “Those who mourn” share an aching heart broken by sin and a mind bruised by anguish. But in Christ they have found a profound love. The broken hearted now understand and practice compassion that cares intensely for the hurts, sorrow, and losses of others.

- C. “The meek” are servants who may appear weak; however, they are the ones who have the most strength. The meek bring peace, calm and harmony to otherwise volatile situations.
- D. “Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” are servants who have a longing to live a life that is right and possess a passion for justice. Each step of life is in hot, restless, eager desire to please God.
- E. “The merciful” have a ministry to the person lost in adversity and hardship.
- F. “The pure in heart” literally means a clean life uncontaminated by corruption. The “pure in heart” have a sincere and honest motive for all to observe.
- G. “The peacemakers” exhibit peace and help others find peace. These servants build others up; watch their attitudes and tongues are quick to heal broken relationships through their trustworthiness.

These important traits of a servant should be exhibited in all Christians.

III. The motive of a servant.

- A. Is not determined by the world, but rather takes form and shape in the world which he/she lives.
- B. Is determined by the love of God and his/her choice to live under that loving demand.
- C. Is understood in the light of the cross that the Master chose for Himself, and that a true servant must choose as well.

“We must realize that the symbol of Christianity is not a beautifully polished cross, but a lopsided, crude, splintery cross over which is draped a towel---not the lush plush kind of towel we buy for our guest bathroom, but a dirty old rag, wet with the sweat and dirt of men’s feet.”* What is your motive for service?

Conclusion:

We have talked and thought enough about Christian service. It is time to step from behind the pulpit and out of the seats we occupy, walk out into the world, and put the words and principles into action...to hammer them out in the world where we live and work and play. May we commit to renew our servanthood by improving our service, by cultivating unselfish acts of kindness to others, and by sharing the love of Jesus!

* Albert M. Wells, Jr., *Inspiring Quotations* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), 184.