

## THE ANT, AN EXAMPLE FOR CHURCH GROWTH

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise” (Pro. 6:6). No matter what they face, or we do to them, ants continue to grow in numbers. Our primary objective is spiritual growth, but we also we want to grow numerically. I believe there are a few things we can learn from our neighbor the ant that will help us to grow in numbers too.

**Ants Work Hard.** You never see an idle ant! Ants are always busy, always working, always doing something. And not just anything, they work for the betterment of the colony. It is because ants have a mind to work. The people of Nehemiah’s day were able to rebuild the wall in 52 days under the threat of attack because, “the people had a mind to work” (Neh. 4:6; 6:15). Our Lord had this mind, “I must work the works of him that sent me” and “wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (John 9:4; Luke 2:49). A mind to work hard in the Father’s vineyard must also be in us: “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

**Ants Work Together.** There is not one ant in the colony that refuses to work with all the rest. They will not fight each other, or oppose each other. Even though one can do quite a bit, they all can do a lot. If you kick over their mound, they will rebuild it before you know it. Ants work well together. We too, must get involved in the Lord’s work together. Yes, we all have a collective responsibility. We are a team, where every member is important and needed (1 Cor. 12:13-27). We are a “colony” of Christians with the same beliefs, who strive for the same goals.

**Ants Reproduce.** No matter how many ants are killed in a day the colony continues to grow. That is because all the casualties are less than the births. We, too, if we are going to grow, must have births in Christ. We lose some members to physical death, and some to spiritual death (in

the sense they fall away). And, though, we gain some members from other congregations the right way to grow is through spiritual births. Jesus said there were/are people who could be born again: “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). We reproduce when the Gospel is obeyed (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:6)!

**Ants Do Not Let the Babies Stay Babies.** Ants have around-the-clock attendants meeting the needs of the young. If the babies stay babies the colony will not grow. When our spiritual babes stay babes, we are not growing either. Proof of this is that they are unable in joining us with the work. The only way to grow spiritually is through the Word of God (Matt. 4:4; 1 Pet. 2:2). We must design classes on the fundamentals (milk of the Word) from which they can grow. We must encourage them to come and participate in worship and other services. They must be taught how to practice Christianity at home and in their daily lives (Acts 17:11).

**Ants Are Faithful unto and Through Death.** Ants never quit, or give up on the work just because they had a bad day. Unlike people, ants never say, “I don’t want to be an ant (Christian) anymore, from now on, I’ll just be a doodle bug.” No, ants are in it for the long haul, until the very end. And if you mess with one, you mess with all. Stop them from their mission, and they will attack putting their very lives on the line. They are committed to each other and to the work! We, too, should be as committed to the work and to each other (1 John 3:16; Rev. 2:10)!

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Richard Stevens III *from Beacon*

## TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES OF THE CHURCH

1. Make church assemblies a priority. It is the most important commitment of each week. It is nothing less than a “meeting with God.”

2. Do not bring God left-overs. God has always demanded the “firstfruits.” He cannot be satisfied with scraps. Get plenty of sleep on Saturday night and come to worship with an alert and refreshed mind.

3. Prepare your mind. Discipline begins in the mind. So does discipleship. Train your mind to concentrate on things of the Spirit.

4. Be on time. Rushing in late makes it difficult for you to settle into meditation and disturbs other worshipers. Get up a little earlier if necessary.

5. Bring your Bible. Coming to worship without your Bible is like going out to drive without your keys.

6. Open your mouth and sing. Singing is not an option. It is a command. Those who violate this command are just as guilty as if they neglected the assembly in the first place.

7. Sit close to the front. Experience has shown that some marginal church members would rather switch congregations than change pews. Research indicates that the level of emotion and mental participation decreases as one moves closer to the back.

8. Before and after the service, be friendly. Worship is enhanced when we are closer as a family. Family members should know and love each other.

9. Listen carefully to the sermon. Taking notes may help. Follow along in your Bible. Take the message seriously. It will help you. It will encourage the speaker. It will show non-Christians that we are serious.

10. Make your worship God-centered, not man-centered. Worship is primarily a giving situation. Those who say, “I don’t get much out of worship,” are wrongly focused.

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*from Banner Of Truth*

## BIRTHDAYS

Charles Tullis, 09-05; Lynda Cole, 09-06; Diana Greer, 09-06; Jennifer Carter, 09-07; Verna Hanson, 09-09.

## ILL

**Sunday:** Chris Edwards (AM). **Wednesday:** Janice Carter, Jessica Carter and Monica Nemechek. Gary Cole's brother, David Cole, of Chattanooga, TN will have surgery to remove a cancerous cyst on his neck. Meredith Greer is in the nursing home in Independence, MO. Please remember these in your prayers.

**Those battling cancer:** Diane Cannon, Ledgia Campbell and Ron Wood. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Lynda Cole, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

## HOME BOUND

Bob Adams is in Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## OUT OF TOWN

The Stillwell family was in Arkansas last weekend. George Thomas was in Illinois Wednesday on business. The Nelson family is in Newton, KS over the weekend.

## POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday, September 3. Enjoy the good food and good company.

## MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

The regularly scheduled Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, September 10 following AM worship.

## MID-WEST LECTURES

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Mid-West Lectures will be held on September 17-21, 2006. The theme this year is: "*Mark Them Which Walk So.*" Flyers are in the foyer.

## ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 59; Sunday PM, 35; Wednesday PM, 42.

## Those To Serve

September 3, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Thrasher

### MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas  
SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson  
OPENING PRAYER ..... John Carter  
PRESIDE..... Gary Cole  
ASSIST..... Allen Scott  
ASSIST..... David Adams  
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Dodson

### EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER ..... Ken Greer  
CLOSING PRAYER..... Myron Nebergall  
LORD'S SUPPER..... Gary Cole

### WEDNESDAY 6th

SONG LEADER..... Jared Nelson  
INVITATION ..... Myron Nebergall

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Sunday

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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