

Heart to Heart

Devotional Thoughts for Women

January 2016

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Get Ready!

This new year really snuck up on me and as a result, I am a week late in getting the ladies bulletin done. Since this is the first bulletin of the new year, that doesn't bode well for me and upcoming deadlines! It turned out to be a blessing in disguise, however, since it gave me an idea for the article - the need for being prepared.

“Preppers” are a trend that is rapidly growing in popularity. People who are classified as preppers are ones who are making preparations in areas such as food preservation, weapons, alternative energy sources and more. Their reasons for preparing vary widely. Some are preparing for a government collapse, an economic collapse, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or other occurrences. It is wise to show a degree of preparedness for any unforeseen event in this earthly life, but in the foreseen event of eternity, how much more important is it to prepare ourselves spiritually?

In this new year, let's get ready to do the following:

- **Prepare our hearts** – Ezra the scribe was a man who was described as one who was “*expert in the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes in Israel.*” (Ezra 7:11) Verse 6 also calls him a “*skilled scribe.*” How does one become an expert in the word of God? It begins with preparing one's heart. In Ezra 7:10 we read, “*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.*” Notice the natural progression that takes place: first Ezra prepared his heart to seek the word of God, then he obeyed it faithfully, and finally, he was able to teach it to others. If we want to be better at evangelizing, if we want to obey God's word more faithfully, then we need to prepare our hearts to seek His Word and grow in it.

- **Prepare to worship** – In Exodus 19, the children of Israel were gathered at Mt. Sinai. The Lord was going to speak so that the entire congregation could hear Him, but first, He gave Moses instructions as to what the people were to do in order to be prepared to be in the presence of almighty God. They were given two days in which to get ready. They were instructed to wash their clothes, but more importantly, they were told to sanctify themselves to be ready for the third day. In other words, they were to set themselves apart from the world and everything in it in order to focus on receiving the words God would say to them. (Exodus 19:9-11) I daresay any of us spend two days preparing for worship, but are we spending any time at all? It is important to prepare our hearts and minds for worship so that we come into the assembly ready to meet God. Ready to offer Him the sacrifice of praise and prayers. Ready to give cheerfully. Ready to remember what our Savior has done for us and to offer thanksgiving for it. Ready to receive the Word and learn from it. If we want to “get something out of worship”, let's make sure we're putting something in – prepare to worship.
- **Prepare to serve** – II Timothy 2:21 tells us to “*be prepared for every good work.*” When we are ready and willing to serve, Paul says we are “*useful for the Master.*” How can the Master use you this year? In what ways are you prepared to serve? Will you be ready to feed the hungry? Give a drink to the thirsty? Clothe the naked? Visit the sick? Help those in prison? Jesus says in Matthew 25:35-40 that when we serve even the least of others in these ways, we are ultimately serving Him. Did you realize that the Lord did some preparing of His own in relation to our serving Him? In Ephesians 2:10 we're told, “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*” Since God has prepared us for good works, we should do no less than be prepared to serve.

Will 2016 see us as spiritual “preppers”? Let's determine to prepare our hearts to seek the word of God, prepare our minds for worship each week, and to prepare our hands and feet to serve others with good works. It's a new year – get ready!

~Heather Pryor

Ladies Bible Class – January 30th at 9:00 a.m. We are continuing a study on prayer titled “Unto Thee, O Lord.” Read and do the December assignments before class. Please bring your Bible and a breakfast item to share.

Ladies Bible Class #2 – We have received a gracious invitation to attend the ladies class at Pinellas Park church of Christ. Class meets each Friday at 1:00 p.m. For more information, call 727-544-8920 or 727-544-6918.

Search the Scriptures

“Be Prepared”

What is/was being prepared in each of the following verses?

1. Psalm 23:5 _____
2. John 14:2 _____
3. Mark 1:3 _____
4. Psalm 80:8-9 _____
5. Hebrews 11:16 _____

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

“Givers”

- | | |
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| <u>f.</u> 1. Mary
<u>e.</u> 2. Barnabas
<u>h.</u> 3. Poor widow
<u>g.</u> 4. Jesus
<u>i.</u> 5. Jacob & Rachel
<u>b.</u> 6. a young boy
<u>j.</u> 7. Dorcas
<u>a.</u> 8. God
<u>c.</u> 9. Jonathan
<u>d.</u> 10. wise men | a. His only begotten Son
b. five loaves and two fish
c. robe, armor, sword, bow and belt
d. gold, frankincense, myrrh
e. money from a land sale
f. a pound of spikenard oil
g. His life
h. two mites
i. a coat of many colors
j. clothes for widows |
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RECIPE CORNER

"She...provides food for her household." ~Prov. 31:15

Warm up on chilly winter days with a delightful hot drink.

SLOW COOKER SALTED CARAMEL HOT CHOCOLATE

- 2 cups milk chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup caramels, unwrapped
- 4 cups milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. fine sea salt

Add chocolate chips, caramels, milk, heavy cream, and vanilla to the slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 2 hours. Stir the hot chocolate. If the chocolate chips or caramels are not completely melted, cover and allow to cook for 20-30 minutes longer. When ready to serve, stir in the sea salt. Serve hot with whipped cream and additional caramel sauce if desired.

HOT SPICED CRANBERRY PUNCH

- 8 cups cranberry juice
- 2 2/3 cups water
- 1 1/3 cups sugar
- 16 whole cloves
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2/3 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup lemon juice

In a Dutch oven or large saucepan, combine the cranberry juice, water and sugar; bring to a boil over medium heat. Place cloves on a double thickness of cheesecloth; bring up corners of cloth and tie with string to form a bag. Add the cinnamon, nutmeg and spice bag to the pan. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Discard spice bag. Stir in the orange and lemon juices. Transfer to a 5-qt. slow cooker; keep warm. Yield: 12 servings (3 quarts).