

Heart to Heart

Devotional Thoughts for Women

March 2015

www.cocnorthside.com

The First Five Minutes

At a ladies seminar, the question was asked, “How many of you have had your feelings hurt by a sister within the first five minutes of walking in the church building?” In a room full of over 300 women, hands immediately shot up everywhere. How sad. I was present at that seminar and the question (along with its subsequent response) made me stop and think about how we should be conducting ourselves beginning the minute we arrive at the Lord's house of worship. Let's consider some things we should/should not do in the first five minutes...

When we arrive on Sunday morning, many of us have a mental “To Do” list buzzing in our heads that is bursting to get out of our mouths the second we're inside. But let's take a minute and consider – if we're asking a teacher, elder, or preacher to do something, we may be distracting them. Many times, they are trying to center their minds on the lesson they are about to present and it is very disturbing to them to be sidetracked the second their foot crosses the threshold. Instead, let's spend the first five minutes greeting them and encouraging them in their teaching. The “To Do” list can wait until after services or be asked of someone else who is not preparing to teach.

When we walk in and see a visitor, do we spend the first five minutes avoiding them, doing other “important” things, or do we immediately go to welcome them and introduce ourselves?

When we walk in and immediately see an erring member that has finally returned to the fold, do we spend the first five minutes greeting them sarcastically or snubbing them

coldly? Instead, how about we warmly welcome them home.

In the first five minutes, do we flock to our family and friends to the exclusion of fellowshiping with others? It can be a real challenge to break out of our comfort zone to strike up a conversation with someone we're not too familiar with, but it gets easier with time and practice. Make it a point to talk to someone new at each service.

How about spending the first five minutes encouraging instead of tearing down, complimenting instead of criticizing, and loving instead of hurting? What a difference it would make in our fellowship and in our worship.

As I write this, I am challenging myself first and foremost. How do I spend my first five minutes in the church building? Are my words, actions and heart pleasing to God in those moments? If they haven't been, I pray they now will be.

I believe the key to this is in preparing our hearts before we ever arrive. We need to have our minds focused on the Lord and our worship of Him, cultivating a proper attitude of humility before Him, giving thanks to God for His blessings and the opportunity to worship and fellowship with our spiritual family. If we will do this, we should arrive with a smile on our face, God's peace in our hearts, and a proper attitude toward worship and others.

I challenge all of my Christian sisters to be more mindful of how we are spending the first five minutes.

~Heather Pryor

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" ~Psalm 122:1

Ladies Bible Class – Saturday, March 14th at 9:00 a.m. Please bring your Bible, book, and a breakfast item to share. We will be beginning our new book, "Impossible".

Search the Scriptures

“Greetings”

Fill in the blank. (Quotations are taken from the NKJV.)

1. “_____ one another with a _____ of _____.”
I Peter 5:14
2. “_____ every _____ in _____
_____.” Philippians 4:21
3. “Woe to you _____! For you _____ the
best _____ in the _____ and
_____ in the _____.”
Luke 11:43
4. “Now one of the _____ men told _____,
Nabal's _____, saying, 'Look, _____ sent
_____ from the _____ to
_____ our _____; and he _____
them.’” I Samuel 25:14
5. “But I hope to _____ you _____, and we shall
_____ face to _____. _____ to
you. Our _____ you. _____
the _____ by name.” III John 14

Answers to last month's quiz

“Women Who Served”

Match the name of the woman on the left with the scripture on the right that mentions her acts of service.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <u> C </u> 1. Dorcas | A. II Kings 4:8-11 |
| <u> D </u> 2. Martha | B. Acts 16:14-15 |
| <u> E </u> 3. Tryphena | C. Acts 9:36-39 |
| <u> B </u> 4. Lydia | D. Luke 10:38-40 |
| <u> A </u> 5. Shunammite woman | E. Romans 16:12 |

“For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.” ~Romans 14:18-19

RECIPE CORNER

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

Carol Johnson submitted this recipe for delicious stuffed peppers.

STUFFED PEPPERS

6 green bell peppers	1/2 tsp. pepper, divided
1 T. butter	1 egg, lightly beaten
1 T. olive oil	1 1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup chopped celery	1 1/2 lb. ground beef, cooked
1/2 cup chopped onion	1 1/2 cup white rice, cooked
1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes	1/2 – 3/4 cup cheddar cheese,
1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce	shredded
2 tsp. salt, divided	

Prepare rice and ground beef and set aside. Cut off tops of peppers, remove seeds and membranes. Chop top part and set aside. Rinse peppers under cold water and place in large pot, cover with salted water. Bring to boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 5 minutes (until peppers are tender). Drain and set aside.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil and butter over medium heat until hot. Saute chopped green pepper (from tops), chopped onion and celery for about 5 minutes or until tender. Add tomatoes, sauce, 1 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper. Simmer for about 10 minutes.

In large mixing bowl, combine egg with remaining salt and pepper. Add Worcestershire sauce and stir to blend. Add cooked ground beef, cooked rice and 1 cup of the tomato sauce mixture. Mix well. Stuff peppers with mixture and place in a 3 quart baking dish. Pour remaining tomato mixture over the peppers and bake at 350 degrees for 55-60 minutes. Top with shredded cheese just before peppers are done and bake until melted.