

## ☞ *Sharing Our Lives Together* ☞

Teaching my 2½ year old about sharing has been a fun experience. At first when I would discuss sharing with Lindsay I would watch the look on her face as she contemplated giving up part of something that was all hers. I could almost see the gears turning in her little head as she thought, *“But if I don’t share, it will be ‘all mine.’ That would give me more!”* What she’s been learning, however, is that sharing builds the love in a relationship, sharing is appreciated, and sharing brings blessing to the giver. She’s also been learning that there are two sides to sharing. Sometimes you’re giving but sometimes you’re receiving. Both aspects have their unique rewards.

Sharing is really the essence of Church fellowship. The Greek word for fellowship comes from a root word meaning “common” or “shared.” So **fellowship means common participation in something either by giving what you have to the other person or receiving what he or she has. Give and take is the essence of fellowship, and give and take must be the way of fellowship in the common life of the body of Christ.**<sup>1</sup>

This summer at Pawtuxet has been a true example of Christian fellowship. We shared in the loss of two families as two young mothers went to be with our Lord. I know that everyone shared in their families’ grief and I watched as many of you gave of yourselves to their loved ones. Their families in turn received your love and support. I watched a handful of committed adult leaders share their time and energy with our youth on a fun summer camping trip. I watched our youth on that trip share their love with one another and serve one another’s needs. I’ve seen our men share their time and encouragement with one another at our monthly men’s breakfasts. I’ve witnessed church family arrive at the airport to welcome and share in the joy of one of our members who adopted a baby girl from Russia. I’ve watched our church be the Church of Jesus Christ this summer!

Consider this story. There was a man who had drifted away from his church family. The preacher had often called him and asked where he was, but the man kept putting the preacher off. Finally, the preacher stopped by for a visit on a cold winter day. The man was sitting in front of his fireplace and welcomed the preacher and tried to engage him in conversation. The minister, however, didn't say much. He just walked over to the fireplace, pulled one of the logs away from the flame - and then went and sat down. They sat there in silence for the longest time, watching the fire. And as they watched the log that sat off by itself, the fire on it began to smolder and then it went out. The preacher and the man sat for a long time looking into the fireplace and then the man said, "I get your point. I'll be at church next Sunday."

Our fellowship in the body of Christ keeps the fire of his light and life alive in each one of us. We encourage and support one another in the name of Jesus as we build a common life together. For some of you, this is an invitation to come home. Would you come home to God’s house? Would you come home to God’s family—to a place of comfort and rest, to a place where you can lay your burdens at the feet of Jesus and be cared for by your brothers and sisters? Would you come home to a place where you, with your God-given strengths and gifts, can give to and serve others in need?

As we move into this Fall time of year I’m looking forward to our season of Homecoming—a time of sharing our lives together.

Thanking God for His Church,



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<sup>1</sup> Your Father Loves You by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986.