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## Upcoming Events

Blood Donation with Carter Blood Care, April 11th (10AM)  
Church Picnic at Mesquite Park, April 18th  
Church Retreat at Tulsa, OK, June 26-28

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## Weekly Schedule

Fri, Apr 3rd (Mesquite) Fasting Prayer @ Parsonage (10 AM)

Fri, Apr 3rd (Metro) Music Concert @ Metro (7 PM)

Sat, April 4th (Metro) Tract Distribution @ Metro (4 PM)

Sat, April 4th (Metro) City Wide Prayer @ Metro (6:45 PM)

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## Condolences

Sosamma Thomas (aged 94), mother of Sis Lizzy and Cherian passed away in Mumbai. Pray for the comfort of Sis Lizzy & family. Pray for Sis Lizzy as she travels to Mumabi for the funeral.

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## Prayer for the Nations: Cote d'Ivoire (Africa)\*

- The Cote d'Ivoire is a story of boom and bust. With the help of slave labour the Cote d'Ivoire developed as a great trading nation while it was a French colony. It is still one the world's largest producers of cocoa, coffee and palm oil.
- While the Cote d'Ivoire was on the up and people streamed in from other countries looking for work but the bubble burst when prices for cocoa and coffee fell in the 1980s.
- Ethnic tensions between Christians in the south and west and Muslims in the north continue to threaten violence and bring instability to the government.
- The number of evangelical Christians has nearly doubled since 1990 – there are now over 700 churches in the capital Abidjan.
- Different churches and denominations are coming together to pray for the country.
- Worshipping spirits and objects has a strong hold in Cote d'Ivoire and gets mixed up in the churches as well. Pray that Christians would break free from spirit worship and find greater freedom in Jesus.
- Pray that churches can work together to develop a strategy for evangelism and church planting, putting aside feelings of competition and pride.
- Pray for the Calvary Ministries institute in Abidjan, who are committed to training missionaries to reach Muslims across French-speaking Africa – a massive area of need.
- The urban population is exploding, doubling every 10 years, with every people group from Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso living in the capital. Pray for the resources and vision to see new disciples and churches grow.

\* [http://operationworld.24-7prayer.com/country.php?country\\_id=68](http://operationworld.24-7prayer.com/country.php?country_id=68)

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of God



*Celebrating the Presence of God  
Demonstrating the Love of God  
Communicating the Word of God  
Educating the People of God*

**March 29, 2009**

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare. (Ps 75:1)

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## Welcome

"I take you, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part."

These are the wedding vows a man and a woman exchange to consecrate their marriage. Every word spoken is understood to be the establishment of a relationship that requires compromise, and a love that strengthens and grows with time. Revelation 19:7-8 states, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." This verse portrays the church as the Bride and Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom, and as a church built on the foundation of Christ, we must yield ourselves to the promises of the wedding vows.

It may seem intimidating to think that we must be able to fulfill every part of these vows. First though we must understand that Christ has also made these same promises to us and he remains faithful to us for each one. God said in Hebrews 13:5, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Never is a strong word but it is repeated twice with boldness and it speaks of His commitment to this marriage as a strong and undying pledge. It's not just sometimes or whenever God feels like it. His promises are true and enduring and he will always remain faithful to us. The challenge for us as the church is to have that same faithfulness towards Christ because the marriage is a relationship between two parties. It's not just God putting in all the effort and us taking the blessings of it.

Remaining faithful to the vows is difficult especially while we face the struggles of the world daily. When we fail a test, experience a loss or face financial problems, it may not be that easy to have and hold Christ or to love and cherish Him because we're simply not concerned about Him at that moment. We know that through trials we can always turn to God's hand for comfort and strength. However we must remember that we're in a relationship, therefore we still need to show God that we love Him. Remember you are in a committed relationship with someone that you can't just leave. Being faithful means talking to Him daily and seeking His face because you're simply in love with Him. It means waiting on Him even when it feels like he doesn't hear you.

If you remain faithful to Him, he will fulfill his promises and strengthen you for anything. In fact, even when you fall short of your promise, he will still be faithful because that is the kind of God we serve, someone who made an eternal commitment. So if God will always be faithful to us, does it matter if we do the same? The truth is we as humans do fail to keep our promises because that is our nature.

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## Sermon Notes

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However at the same time, God has equipped us with the ability to be faithful. Galations 5:22 describes the fruit of the Spirit as "...patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...." Obviously it means constant adjustments and compromises but we are capable of doing these things, especially if the cause is for Christ. Also in Revelation 19:7 it says that "the wife has made herself ready" so even before the marriage took place, God expected us to be able to prepare ourselves for the requirements of the commitment.

If you don't work at the relationship you have with Christ, it will become like any other relationship that has no effort put into it. You will be losing out on something that brings everlasting joy and a peace with it. Even though God remains faithful, if you cannot reciprocate it, you will never be able to take away all the love and blessings that this marriage has to offer. We must also remember that this is a divine marriage that transcends what our worldly expectation of marriage is supposed to be. It may seem like an imperfect union because of our nature as humans, but God's character is more than enough to make this the greatest marriage of all.

In Christ alone,  
Santhra Sebastian