



SONrise November-December 2001
EMMAUS
NEWSLETTER
... Strengthening the Local Church

“One Thing”

This has been an incredible year for me as your Community Lay Director. It hasn't flown by as years often do because it has been filled with so many wonderful experiences – Spirit-filled Walks, prayers answered in so many different lives (including your prayers of healing for me), and hundreds of opportunities to greet people with a “holy kiss”. Two parts of the job that I was least looking forward to turned out to be the most God-filled experiences of all – the monthly Board meetings (I'm not an administrative type) and these newsletter articles (you are an awfully big audience). If you asked me, “What ‘one thing’ was best about being Lay Director?” it would be hard to answer, but I was recently asked to talk about what ‘one thing’ best defined me and my relationship with God.

First Broad Street UMC has begun another Wednesday night worship service that is directly modeled after the Emmaus talk experience. It was a vision entrusted to Russ Brogden, and he and God (with the help of others who have experienced Emmaus) have made it happen. There is praise singing up front, agape food in the back, and a Prayer Chapel around the corner where the speaker is prayed for during the singing. The talk is often followed with small group discussions or Communion. Rather than follow a talk outline, each speaker is asked to share his or her personal ‘One Thing’, thus the name of the worship service is One Thing.

Many years ago, Janie Hobbs (who sponsored me on my Emmaus Walk) told me that in preparing a lesson for the youth, I should decide on the ‘one thing’ I wanted them to hear, and then build my whole lesson around it. Her advice not only brought focus to my teaching, it brought focus to my life. But it was through Emmaus that I learned *how* to focus and *what* to focus on. Before my Walk, I was involved in so many different things at home, at church, and at work, that I wasn't doing any of them well. But after seeing the quantity and power of prayer in Emmaus, I let God lead me to a higher level of prayer – a listening level that allowed God to direct specific things in my life. God reduced the clutter in my life and helped me focus by teaching me to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to opportunities based on prayer rather than on the merits of the opportunity or my desire to do it.

But where Emmaus had the greatest impact on my life was helping me to understand Agape. Seven years before my Walk, Margie Nichols (who was our Youth Director at the time and the first person I sponsored to Emmaus) told me, “It's not enough to love the youth with our love, we must love them with God's Love.” I wanted very much to do that, but at the time, I had no clue what she was talking about. I tried to love with God's Love as Margie did, but it wasn't until I went on my Walk and saw God's Agape Love in action all around me – a love that was totally underserved and could never be repaid, a love that was expressed both in Joy and in sacrifice - that I finally understood what Margie was talking about. I also realized that not just the youth, but my wife, my children, and every other relationship in my life, needed God's Love rather than my own. As God was teaching me how to do this, He led me to a quotation from Mother Teresa, “We cannot all do great things, but we can *all* do small things with great love.” This “great love”

is at its greatest when it is God's Love. So this is my 'one thing', my focus in life – “To do small things with God's Love rather than my own.”

There are many aspects to the Emmaus model, but this is the heart of Emmaus – the 'one thing' that makes it work – “to do small things with God's Love”. If we, as individuals and as the Emmaus Community, will listen to God in prayer, and will focus on doing the small things we are led to with God's Agape Love, then God will do Great Things in Emmaus, in our family, in our church, and in our world.

De Colores

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Community Lay Director