

- **\*Read Philippians 3:12-14\*** It can certainly be said that the Apostle Paul was a goal oriented person. He had goals concerning his ministry in the fact that he wanted to take the Gospel to those places where it had not been heard. **(Romans 15:20,21)** He had a goal of going to Spain and visiting the Christians in Rome. **(Rom. 15:28)** He had the goal of running this race with a purpose so that he might achieve to this ultimate goal he talks about in **Philippians 3. (I Cor. 9:26,27)** Paul knew what he wanted to do and he was going to give every effort to achieve his goals.
- Our Shepherds understand the wisdom in setting goals for any individual in group, and they have been busy putting their heads together and coming up with a focus and some goals for this congregation for the year 2016. The booklets you have been given are the fruit of their efforts for this churches growth in 2016. They have decided upon a focus for us for 2016, and then they have also planned out many other goals for us to work towards in this upcoming year.
- It is good for us to be reminded that Shepherds within the Lord's churches serve a vital role to God's Kingdom, and they have great responsibilities upon their shoulders as they watch out for our souls. **(Hebrews 13:17)** May we show our respect and appreciation for their responsibilities and efforts by giving great effort to reach the goals that they have set for this church in 2016.

### **Our Goals For 2016**

#### **I. We want to focus during 2016 on the idea of serving the Kingdom.**

- A. We seek to have a focus for each year because a church with a strong focus is a church that has a greater chance of accomplishing great things for the Kingdom of God. Bill Copeland said it well when he said that, "The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score."
- B. The Shepherds want this church to be a church that has a great chance of accomplishing much by having a strong focus for each year. For 2016, our shepherds had decided for us to focus on the idea of serving the Kingdom.
- C. As Christians, we are to have the same mind that Christ possessed when He was on this earth. Our text that we will come back to time and time again will be that of **Philippians 2:1-11**.
- D. Our God expects us to imitate His Son in our service to others and the Kingdom. This upcoming year, we will speak about the different ways that each of us can serve others and the Kingdom.
- E. By the end of the year, our hope is that each of us will be plugged into the different places where we can give great service to others so that our faith will be stronger and the Kingdom of God will be strengthened.

#### **II. We want to be dedicated to the work and efforts of this local church.**

- A. There are two different types of approaches to church membership. There are those that are listed in the directory and they come to worship, but you don't really see them besides that. And then there are others who are present at worship, but they are also really active within the congregation in many different ways.
- B. We want every member to be more than just that Christian who comes to worship service alone. We want all of our family at this church to be members that are active in building up the strength of this church. **(Eph. 4:11-16)**
- C. The easiest thing everyone can do to support the work of this church is to be present. Be present at our Bible studies. Be present at our worship services. Be present at our special studies or events. Be present at our outside studies.
- D. Then you can even go beyond that by inviting others, taking an active role in the studies, or leading in some capacity. If we will all be dedicated to the work and efforts of this church then we will grow exponentially as individuals and collectively.

#### **III. We want to be diligent to take every opportunity to be built up in Bible study.**

- A. Along the same lines, but getting a little more specific, we want give every effort to take advantage of the Bible study opportunities that this church will be engaged in this next year.
- B. While much spiritual growth should come from our individual homes, **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Ephesians 6:4 seem to make that clear**, we as a church want to provide opportunities for growth through dedicated Bible study as a good supplement to the teachings that are already taking place in our homes.
- C. Our goal for providing these times of study is for us all to be strengthened by being in God's Word as much as we can be.

- D. As most churches do, we provide times of study divided up by ages when we assemble on Sundays and Wednesdays (next year's schedule is already finished and included in our booklets), but we also want to provide some studies that are more specific to gender and age. Our Mens', Ladies', and Young Peoples' studies are wonderful opportunities for us to study about things that are specific to our places in this life.
- E. As men, we will studying through Stu Webbers "Tender Warrior" book to learn how to be better husbands, fathers, and godly leaders. The ladies will continue their study in Celine Sparks book "Because I said so..." This books looks at many different saying that our mothers told us growing up and seeing the Biblical truths that many of them possess. And then our young people will have their foundations of faith strengthened by a study of Marc Hinds "Big Picture of the Bible" book.
- F. Again, all of this is in an effort to accomplish the goal strengthening our members so that they might be able to properly handle God's Word. **(II Tim. 2:15)**

#### **IV. We want to read through the first 14 books of the Old Testament.**

- A. Our kids' Bible classes will be studying through the accounts of Israel's exodus, journeying, & conquest of the promised land. In an effort to create some continuity within the congregation, our daily Bible reading for 2016 will cover the first 14 books of the Old Testament. The math breaks down to right around 8 chapters a week for 2016, which really isn't that bad at all.
- B. While some would frown upon time spent reading and studying the Old Testament, I would suggest that the OT holds great value to us as Christians. While we might not use it as a standard for authority, we must recognize, as Paul did, that those things written in earlier times hold great value. **(Rom. 15:4)**
- C. It won't match up perfectly, but our studies through these books should help us in preparations for our young people's Bible classes, and we will also have the opportunity to brush up on some stories that we learned of over the years.
- D. This would also be a great time to utilize the PATH Bible study method. What things from these first 14 books cause us to praise God? What admonishes us? What causes us to trust God more? What helps me to persevere in this life? The Old Testament accounts can surely answer all of these questions for us and more.
- E. May we reach our goal of reading these books in 2016 and benefitting greatly from them.

#### **V. We want to take time to evaluate how well we are meeting our goals throughout the year.**

- A. Setting goals is good and all, but if we don't take some time for evaluation then we will never know how we have done. Our final goal we want to address this morning is our goal of constant evaluation in 2016.
- B. We want to evaluate ourselves in 3 main areas: Our Daily Bible reading progress, our evangelism progress and our edification progress. "How am I doing throughout the year in these areas?" is the question that we want to be asking ourselves all throughout 2016.
- C. I don't know about you, but once I see something on paper, it hits me a lot harder. It's kinda like our weight. We might gain some weight, our clothes might not fit as good, we might not feel all that great, but the reality of our situation doesn't hit us until we step on the scale and that number pops up. Or it might be like back in college for me. I knew my grades weren't great. I didn't know what I needed to know for the tests and quizzes, but it wasn't until I saw that grade online that I knew how much trouble I was really in.....The same is true for our spiritual growth and progress throughout the year.
- D. This section of the booklet was provided for us all to keep tabs on how we are doing in these all important areas. If we are honest and fill it our accurately then this page can be our greatest friend this year. It was be great encouragement for us to stay on top of our responsibilities for the year. If we see that we're slacking, then we can recognize that and pick it up.
- E. Self evaluation is something that we should all give effort towards. **(II Cor. 13:5)** If we fail to examine ourselves and check our progress, then we can get so far off course that it will be very difficult to get back on track. May we all give great efforts to constantly check our efforts throughout the year so that we can meet our goals for 2016!

I am so very appreciative for shepherds who love me enough to set goals for me to reach for. These goals and our focus for next year should be so beneficial for us in regards to our spiritual health and growth. If we will lean on God for strength and guidance, then I am confident that 2016 can be a huge year for this church and us as individuals. May God help us all to be locked in in 2016 so that we will abound as His disciples, so that the Kingdom will be served and strengthened, and so that God will be glorified in all that we do. May God be glorified in 2016 by this church!