

The Church Basement Blood Pressure Ladies and What They Do

-Christina Olson

Have you ever walked into church on any given Sunday, caught a glimpse of your fellow church member with a blood pressure cuff around their arm in the basement, and just couldn't help but wonder what in the world the connection is between blood pressures and church?! So, let us explain. Once a month, following first service, a table is set up in the basement and attended to by a few registered nurses in our congregation to perform free blood pressure checks. Our mission is to help those in our church body better gauge their health so that they can be at an optimal level of physical functioning to go out and continue to serve our Lord God.

Leviticus 17:14 states, "The life of every creature is its blood . . ." (NIV).

Interestingly, if this pressure of "the life of every creature" is not consistently within the normal range, it is widely known to be a contributing factor to numerous other health problems

such as heart disease, kidney failure, and increased risk for heart attacks and strokes. So, what is blood pressure anyway? By definition, blood pressure is the pressure exerted by blood on the walls of the blood vessels.

Several ways in which to help control your blood pressure include: maintaining a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and being physically active, to name a few.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" 1 Cor. 6:19-20 (NIV). Don't hesitate to come and have your blood pressure checked. We want to see you healthy!

While there is much we can do to control our blood pressure, your Church Basement Blood Pressure Ladies would like to leave you with one final thought—Relax, take a deep

breath, and when you go to bed at night, remember Psalm 3:5, "I lie down and sleep, I wake again because the LORD sustains me" (NIV).

Sincerely,
Your Church Basement Blood Pressure Ladies

A special thank you to all those nurses in our congregation who are willing to help out when we need you!

*Disclaimer: If you have serious concerns about your blood pressure or any other health issues, please contact your primary care provider immediately.

Quick reference to Blood Pressure Levels:

- Low blood pressure: 90/60 or lower.
- Normal blood pressure: Between 90/60 and 120/80.
- Borderline high blood pressure: Between 120/80 and 140/90.
- High Blood Pressure: 140/90 or higher.

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"LIFE TO THE FULLEST"

Jesus told us that he came so that we would have "life to the fullest" (John 10:10).

Most people aren't living life this way. Sure, most people have full lives. They're always going from one place to another, from one accomplishment to another, and often from one relationship to another. Many people's schedules are full, but that's a far cry from living life to the fullest.

First and foremost, living life to the fullest starts with Jesus. We cannot have a full life without him. Salvation is the starting point, but it is not the end. There are a lot - I mean a lot - of unfulfilled Christians.

After salvation, a fulfilled life is one where three basic needs are met. God has uniquely called the Body of Christ to meet those needs.

1. **Support:** Everyone wants to know they are not alone. God said in Genesis 2:18, "*It is not good for man to be alone.*" But a lot of factors in today's world cause us to be more alone. People coming to First Free are searching for something to belong to. They want to know they aren't alone. They want to know someone cares about them.

That is where we get to step in. God designed the church to be a family (Ephesians 2:19). Our Adult Bible Fellowships and small groups are crucial to this. That's where we meet the need for support in people's lives.

2. **Stability:** People are looking for a strong foundation to build their lives on. Even though every study you read these days says that people do not believe in absolutes anymore, deep down, they still know life requires it. If you have no absolutes, you are asking for anxiety and stress.

People walk into First Free every weekend seeking absolutes to build their lives around. Whether they want to admit it or not, they are looking for principles to help guide them. Until people establish an authority

in their lives, they'll never have life to its fullest.

We have an opportunity to do that. We must teach people that God's Word is that kind of authority. It is an anchor that we can depend upon when life gets rough.

3. **Significance:** We all want to know our life matters. We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We've been wired for this.

You and I are a part of the biggest mission imaginable - sharing the Good News about God's Kingdom. I can't think of any bigger mission to center our lives around.

Philippians 2:13 says, "*For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*" God had a purpose for our lives even before we were born. One of the greatest things we can do at First Free is to help people discover what their unique mission is.

As a church we are uniquely set up to help meet people's need of support - because we are committed to fellowship. We are uniquely designed to help meet people's need of stability - because we are committed to discipleship and teaching God's Word. And we are uniquely created to help meet people's need of significance - because we are committed to equipping them for ministry, evangelism, and mission. As God's church, we are uniquely put in this place to help people live life to the fullest.

- Pastor Joel

"Portraits of the Cross"

- March 8 - My God, Why? - Psalm 22; Matthew 27:46
- March 15 - Undeserved Righteousness - Romans 3:21-26
- March 22 - Tragic Victory - Colossians 2:8-15
- March 29 - Once for All - Hebrews 10:1-18
- April 5 - Palm Sunday - Wise Folly - I Corinthians 1:18-2:5

We exist to
BRING people
into a relationship
with Jesus

CONNECT them
to God's family

MATURE them
in their faith

EQUIP them
for ministry

so that God's name
is EXALTED

Joining the Family

- Alan Peterson

I was speaking with a young man recently who is in the process of becoming a member here at First Free. He was eager to join, but at the same time, expressed regret that he might not be in Minnesota much longer. I assured him that his membership would be no less meaningful if it were brief, since it is not the time but the commitment that is important.

I believe this conversation illustrates the need to be clear with what membership here at First Free is all about. The idea of membership in our culture seems to carry a certain amount of baggage. For many, the concept of membership is tied to either privilege or ownership. Since we as a church apparently attach no benefits to membership, then why join? This is a perfectly reasonable question to ask in our culture, but not such a wise question for a follower of Christ to ask. As Christians, we understand the need to resist many of our culture's values, and joining a local church is one way to express such resistance. Through the commitment of membership, you establish yourself as one who is not just an observer, but a believer in the mission of the church. You show that you are prepared to help carry out that mission.

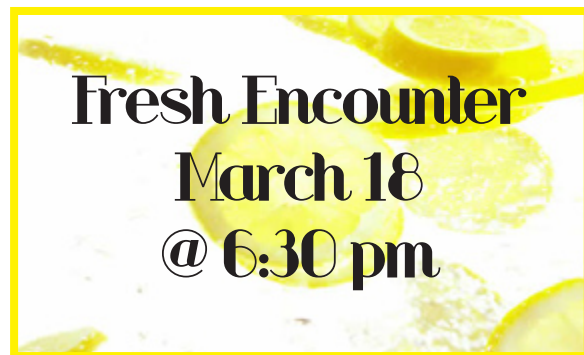
Through the commitment of membership, you establish yourself as one who is not just an observer, but a believer in the mission of the church.

I realize that there are those reading this who do have just such a commitment to First Free, but for any number of reasons, have not taken the step of formalizing that commitment through membership. Let me first say that your commitment is appreciated here at First Free, but secondly, allow me to invite you to reconsider or revisit your decision not to join. The commitment you have deserves the formal expression that membership would give it.

I know there are also many of you who are newer to the First Free family, and to you, we would like to extend the invitation to join as well. Membership is a natural step to take for you who are confident in your faith and appreciate the value of a church family.

So, watch the bulletin for the next Exploring Church Membership class, and come give us the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

Did you know that we have added 26 new members at our last two business meetings? Come and be a part of a growing and vital church family.



Fresh Encounter
March 18
@ 6:30 pm



SPECIAL SERVICES:
GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 10TH AT 7 PM
"MAN OF SORROWS"
EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH
9:30 AM & 11:00 AM
"BEYOND THE CROSS"
1 CORINTHIANS 15

Generosity: What We Mean By Being Generous

- Joel Burns

My greatest example of generosity personified is Elsie Klein, otherwise known as Grandma Klein. She has never made a lot of money. Grandma grew up during the depression, raised three boys on her own, and now, despite living on a fixed income, she is always able to offer help to a family member or friend in need.

My three siblings and I grew up literally tasting of her generous nature. At least once a year, the Burns family would pile into the car and make the drive to visit Grandpa and Grandma. We'd arrive late at night, awaking in their driveway, seeing the light at the back doorway go on, and within several minutes of entering the house, we would devour a table full of food. To this day, dinners with Grandma conclude with her comments that "we didn't eat much" and "here is some more." I get the sense that everyone else who visits Grandma receives the same treatment and that she plays a quiet

role helping out friends in the small town where she now lives.

Without Grandma's knowledge, I wanted to get her take on generosity for this article. This last week I asked her the question, "How did people get through the depression?" I knew her family was generous, even in the tough times. She said, "We were all poor, and we shared what we had with anyone who needed it, even if we didn't have much to give."

Whatever may come, let's encourage and support each other and demonstrate God's love ...

Her father salted pork, made lard, and grew beans and many other foodstuffs, "he provided what we needed." She shared how folks were invited into their home for something to eat, whether they were travelers, family, or friends. Her father would even deliver food

to those whom he knew needed it. What a great picture of generosity and a timely one at that. Her family's story illustrates how we as believers are to live in this nature of generosity. James 2:5 says, "...did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"

Of course, without our belief in God and His mercy, we are all the "poor" ones no matter the economic status of our nation. Whatever may come, let's encourage and support each other and demonstrate God's love through our material generosity. If there are challenging times ahead, let our faith in our Father's provision as a church body overcome it. And what better way to practice our spiritual generosity than by taking up the current sermon series challenge of telling others what God has given to us. Are you ready to take the living bread and water to the "poor" people in your life?

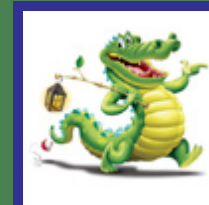
"COME, MESSIAH, COME"



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