

**Anaheim SDA Church
Mid-week Pastor's Update
February 8, 2017**



“I go to prepare a place for you...” John 14:6

The other day I inadvertently became a third party to an argument over a parking spot. As I had finished my errand, I was walking in the crowded parking lot back to my car. Behind me a woman in a white car saw me approaching my car and put on her blinker, showing her intent to enter the parking space I'd be vacating. I took a little while to get out, as I'd accidentally put my keys in my jacket pocket, which I'd placed in the back seat. But the woman was patient, and I waved to her as I backed-out, thanking her for her patience. Suddenly, though, another car came from a different direction and zipped into the spot before the first woman could enter. The woman in the white car tooted her horn, but the other car did not back out; rather, the people in it started to get out of their car. The first woman opened her door and called to the family getting out of the car that she had been waiting for that spot. At this point I thought it would be helpful to get out and confirm the first woman's claim that she, indeed, had been waiting for that spot as I'd been getting into my car. So I walked over and said to this second woman, now getting out of the parked car, that the first woman was right and had been waiting for the space first. "Too bad, I grabbed it first" was this second woman's response. I was taken aback that this person would blatantly, knowingly take someone else's spot, though she knew that person had been waiting for it and now had two people calling her to account for it. "That's pretty rude." I said to her. "Well, that's nice" the woman said back to me. And as I was just about to say "No...", the first woman aggressively shouted "No, you know what? It's fine. Because God is in control, and what goes around comes around!" This now made me cringe, because, not only had the first woman brought God into the conversation, but had done so in a sense of implying that he would somehow do something to this second woman to pay her back for her lack of consideration. Furthermore, she had used a line of reasoning that was NOT Biblical, in fact it was the opposite of Biblical! "God causes his sun to rise and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust" the Bible says (Matthew 5:45). It also says things like "The lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love" (Ps. 103:8, etc.). And even when God's judgment does come, it is

never hastily or capriciously! Only after God has endured resistance and stubbornness for long amounts of time (usually generations).

So I had a split-second decision for what to do: do I correct this woman's theological error, the one I was aiming to help? That would only add fuel to the fire and embolden the second woman's obstinacy. The second woman at this point closed her door, gathered her kids, and began to leave. "I'm very sorry" was all I could think of to say to the first woman, who was storming back to her car. I left the situation feeling icky and discouraged on multiple fronts.

How exasperating it must be for God to see us err in so many ways simultaneously! Neither of these people were right in how they handled the situation, and I was down on myself for having been ineffective to resolve it. While the event affected my mood for the next hour or so, I figured that God must endure things like this constantly! And what he sees are 100 times worse! And I was just moved with love for his patience and compassion. Were I God, I surely would've given up on planet earth long ago. Praise the Lord, He is better than I. His patient endurance is long, his mercy is unmatched. His love is incomparable.

All praise belongs to God for his goodness toward us. I pray that his patience and kindness would have its intended end; to bring us to repentance and life. (Romans 2:4) Oh, that we could see the error of our ways! That we would come to him and repent, and find forgiveness and life! It's a beautiful vision which, I'm sure will have mixed results in the end. But praise God that he holds out hope for the ones who will respond; the few who feel the tug on their conscience and respond to it. I pray this for both of the women I interacted with that afternoon, that God would soften their hearts, and that they would see that petty things are just that: petty. All this over a parking spot! Again, Lord help us.

May God bless you and yours during this week.

Sincerely,
Pastor Mark Tatum

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- Please pray for Grandma Ford's health, as she was recently admitted to the hospital with intestinal issues. Not much information is known at this time, but please keep her in your prayers.
 - Praise the Lord, some of our church members with recent health emergencies are on the mend.
 - Claudia F is recuperating well from her surgery, we hope to see her back at church this Sabbath.
 - Vivian R. is currently at an assisted living facility, recovering from her recent health emergency.
 - And Daniel G. was at church this past Sabbath, we were so thrilled to celebrate his birthday (a little early) at potluck time.

These members could still use prayers for healing & strengthening going forward. We pray to see these members back with us soon. Please keep Nicole H. and Rosa F.'s ongoing health concerns in your prayers as well.

- Esther Sellers is praising the Lord that situations have improved for a couple of her counseling patients. She still asks us to pray though, as some of them are still going through hard times.
- The Flores family requests prayers for a young man named Nicolas, a friend of their family, who recently suffered a bad car accident. Pray that he recuperates and can return to regular life soon.
- Pray for several ‘prodigal’ children of church members who have left the faith, whose parents are praying fervently that they come back. (The Lord himself knows this feeling many times over!)
- Praise the Lord, our business meeting went well this past Sabbath afternoon. Please continue to pray for our church as a whole, and all its volunteers, as we bulk-up our teams in various departments. Pray that we may work efficiently and happily in ministering to our members, families, and overall community.
- Particularly as we continue through the recent major transfer of power in our own U.S. government, we ask that you pray for our leaders, both national and international, that they may make wise decisions, and that we may have a peaceful and stable society to do our Spiritual work in (1 Tim. 2:1-4, John 9:4)

If you have a prayer request you would like to submit to our prayer list, please contact Pastor Mark or Maritza in the church office, and let them know.

Month of Organizational Emphasis: Last Sabbath we kicked-off our month of organizational emphasis with a business meeting after our potluck time. Thanks to all those who stayed by and helped that meeting be a success. If you weren't able to be at last week's meeting, but would like to see what ministry groups at the church could use a helping hand, and possibly sign-up for a group, we will have the list on the deacons' table the next couple Sabbaths. Look for organizational meetings for the various volunteer groups in the latter part of the month.

Recent Pathfinder Joshua Tree Trip: The county-wide Pathfinder trip was a success this past weekend, praise the Lord. Thanks to brothers Joel, Margarito, Israel, and others, who helped make the trip a fun and safe one for our club.

Adult Sabbath School: Each week, our Adult Sabbath School program starts at 9:30 AM in the Sanctuary. This week we continue our February theme of Love, with the following topics in upcoming weeks:

Feb. 11th - The love story of St. Valentine. (video presentation)

Feb. 18th "The biochemistry of love" by Dr. Israel Chambi

Feb. 25th "Is the Mother Nature an expression of love?" by Dr. Clifford Vance

Also, as per our vote at last Sabbath's business meeting, as of March, the Spanish-speaking members of our church will be joining the sanctuary Sabbath School program on the 1st and 3rd Sabbaths of the month. The Spanish Sabbath School classes will be held from 10:00 – 10:45 in the main sanctuary on those Sabbaths.

Kids' Sabbath Morning Program: Our children's service starts with light refreshments and song-service in the Pathfinder room at 9:30 in the morning. Then, at 10:00 they are dismissed to their respective Sabbath Schools. Please make it a point to arrive on time so your kids (and you) can get the fullest benefit of our Sabbath School programs!

Prayer Groups & Bible Study: Although January's "Month of Spiritual Emphasis" has recently finished, we want to keep the Spiritual momentum going through weekly prayer groups and Bible-Study opportunity. Prayer meeting meets in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays (English) and Wednesdays (Spanish). Friday night Bible study (currently in the book of Isaiah) meets at 6:00 p.m. in the Primary Sabbath School room. We hope you are blessed with these supplements to your personal prayer/devotional times! May we ever walk closer to Christ, and be more bonded to each-other.

Note: due to next week's Valentines day (Tuesday) and board meeting (Wednesday), the **English prayer meeting is going to be moved to Thursday night, the 16th.** Spanish group may be moved as well. Look for an update in next Sabbath's bulletin and the next pastor's e-mail.

Food Bank Hours & Distribution: Our food bank is open every Saturday afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the room adjacent to the fellowship hall. Please share about our Food Bank with your relatives, friends, neighbors, or anyone who might benefit from receiving food. We are also looking for volunteers who can help, particularly as Vivian is needing to take some time off from her duties. We need people who can volunteer during the week to pick up food from grocery stores, serve in the food bank itself on Sabbath afternoons, and some who can take extra food to homeless people (and we can suggest places to take it to). If you would like to volunteer, please contact Ana Elias, or speak to Maritza in the Church Office.

International Food Fair February 25th! In the church fellowship hall that Sabbath evening, we'll be enjoying the exotic and varied tastes of different cultures. Mrs. Furness is facilitating the organization of this event. Feel free to contact her for more details or to volunteer to provide something.

Pastor's Office Hours: Both this week and next, Pastor Mark plans to be at the church from 2-6 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday. Feel free to come by to talk/pray/study the word together. If these times are not convenient to you, or you would like to schedule a special meeting at a different time/place, don't hesitate to call/text Pastor Mark at (714) 650-1245, or e-mail him at prmarktatum@gmail.com.

Weekly Pastor's E-mail: If you know someone who benefit from receiving this weekly devotional thought, please have them contact Pastor Mark or the church office with the person's e-mail contact info to be added to this e-mail list.

Alright! I think that pretty well sums-up what's going on at the church lately! Praise the Lord for sunshine after the rain. We pray you and your families are blessed this week. We so appreciate the commitment and dedication of our members and volunteers. God bless you and yours as we continue going forward.

Sincerely,
Pastor Mark Tatum