

Thanksgiving?

Yep, you read that correctly. I can't wait to "get" to eat amazingly large portions of turkey, potatoes, and pie! I can't wait to "get" some time away from the office! I can't wait to "get" to sleep in...oh, wait...I forgot about those three little bundles of joy. For some reason they seem to like spreading the joy long before I feel ready to receive it! ☺

As we all know, the word is "Thanksgiving." Obviously the inventors of that word and holiday created it for all of us to take some time out of our normal routine and give thanks for all the blessings we have. However, in light of what James has been teaching us on the weekends through his letter, I would like to suggest that *giving is an action*, and that we can say "thank you" in so many more ways than just words. There are tons of ways we can give this holiday season...just pick up a copy of your local newspaper and you will find a plethora (like that word? ☺) of opportunities beckoning to you for help. There's the need for turkeys at the Food Bank, there's the Holiday Blessings ministry put on by our very own Mike and Julie Clapp (hooray!), and there's the Christmas Eve dinner being served at a local restaurant for the homeless, those that are alone, or families that are really struggling to make ends meet. These are just a few! What could possibly keep us, as Papa's ambassador's on this little blue orb, from getting involved in a worthy cause to help people? I double-dog dare you to do something—ANYTHING—and do it now!

Now for some Family news:

As a staff, we have been taking time to review the church's "Mission & Values" statements, and we will be calling on the leadership of *New Hope* to help us sort through what our specific mission is, and what those values are that make us uniquely who we are.

We are working towards having a well-thought out "pathway of connection" for anyone that is being called to be part of this Family. It will include things like our *New Believer's* class, *Partnership* (f.k.a., Membership), *Cleansing Stream*, Spiritual Gifts Inventory. We really want to help people plug in and serve in the Family, and then we want them to reach out and touch the world with Jesus' light and love. Reaching, Mending, Training, Sending...

We, as a staff, are planning a huge "Volunteer Appreciation Dinner" for the evening of January 23rd. It's been too long since we have honored the many volunteers that keep our ministries moving forward, so now is the time!

Also, we are planning to have our next "Family Meeting" on the evening of Sunday, February 8th. Details will follow in the bulletin.

We really are working towards having a much clearer vision of God's call for this church body, and then having our budget and calendar of events reflect that specific vision for *New Hope*. If we will really dig down and do what Jesus is calling us to do, and fight to stay on the path He lays out before us, and if we fiercely say "NO!" to anything else (no matter how "good" it is...), I think we will all be amazed at what *New Hope Church* is going to look like in the next 5 years to come and beyond. I am almost giddy in anticipation for the lives that Jesus is going to transform through the obedient vessel we are becoming! ☺

"Fill us up, and send us out, LORD!"

