



Pastor's Perspective — Shedding the Weight

By Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Weight loss.... If it's on your mind, you are not alone. More than a few of us are feeling a little heavier, a little thicker, a little slower than we did about six weeks ago, before all of the feeding associated with Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Given this state of affairs, it doesn't take a lot of imagination to understand why the vow to lose weight is among the most common of all New Year's resolutions. If you have established some goals in this area, I wish you every success, as the general care of our bodies is a matter of biblical interest and, therefore, of concern to God.

It is interesting to note, however, that the Bible's only specific reference to weight loss has nothing to do with the extra pounds around the waist or on the thighs, but with the weight that tethers our hearts to this earth, which is passing away, and prevents us

Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)
...let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

from entering into fellowship with Him, which is eternal. In Hebrews 12:1, we are commanded to *throw off everything that hinders*—literally, “every weight” that keeps us from that goal. This we accomplish with God's help as we yield our lives to Him in obedience to His Word, adopting His values and perspectives, looking resolutely unto Jesus who has exemplified that life for us that we might follow Him.

Whether you were thinking about weight loss in this New Year or not, I would especially commend to you that which God explicitly commends in His Word. May this New Year be one in which we shed that weight which is heaviest of all—the weight that drags us down and holds us back from knowing and experiencing the fullness of joy and life that God has purposed for us in this world as servants of His Son, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Missions News

Christmas Missionary Offering: Through the annual Christmas offering, \$6,777 was given for our missionaries, more than doubling our goal of \$3,250. This enabled Fellowship to present each family with a gift more than two times the monthly support we provide. Thank you for this generous expression of your love for the Lord and for our missionaries who are serving Him in our behalf.



Missionary Visit: Becky Courliss will be at Fellowship on Sunday, January 20. Miss Courliss visited in 2001 during her pre-field ministry and is returning to share concerning her first term of ministry in Togo, West Africa. She will speak to the youth Sunday school class, Junior church students and Awana clubbers, and will also share briefly during the morning service.

New Missionary: The 2008 missions budget enables Fellowship to add an additional missionary to our missions team. Please pray for the Missions Committee as they seek out a missionary to recommend to the church.

Servants for 2008

Ramiro Esquivel was elected at the December Annual Meeting to serve as a deacon, joining Frank Buckley, Pete English and Doug Mount in providing critical assistance to our Pastors as they lead the church.

Numerous other church members have agreed to serve as Church Officers, Officials and other leaders in this new year. Their appointments will be made official

at the January Annual Meeting. We are thankful for their willingness to serve the Lord and His church. Please pray for each one as they build up the body of Christ through their ministry. Consider also how you may be involved in encouraging and assisting them in this work, that our church might grow and build itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ministering to Our Men

A **Men's Breakfast** will be held on Saturday, January 19 (8:00 AM). We are thankful for the strong participation of our men in 2007, and encourage each one to come and grow as God's man. Doug Mount will speak on “Serving as Salt and Light in the Workplace”.

...and Women

Women's Ministries is sponsoring a **Game Night** on Friday, January 19 (7:00 PM). All of the ladies are invited to this time of fellowship designed to strengthen our ministries to one another. Also, please plan to attend the annual **Heart Friend Party** on February 8.



Getting to Know Our Church Family

Luis Martinez

Luis was born in Puerto Rico, and moved with his family to New York City when he was three. He grew up on the city's Lower West Side and in the Bronx. Luis' father, who was a Korean War veteran, worked as a doorman, and his mother cared for their 7 children. Luis' mom was also very involved with the Roman Catholic church the family attended.

Growing up, Luis' favorite interests were sports. In addition to playing baseball and football throughout his school career, Luis also spent lots of time at Yankee stadium watching games.

After graduating from high school, Luis served in the US Army, first as a member of a missile crew and later



as a legal clerk. After leaving the Army, Luis began a career in law enforcement, his first job being a police officer in the Midwest.

Luis was baptized as a child, but did not find what he was looking for through his religious experience as a young person. While in the Army, he attended a Baptist church where he came to the decision to accept Jesus as Savior and was re-baptized.

Luis endured a difficult marriage ending in divorce. He has raised his daughter Mykella on his own since she was 8 years old. Now 20, Kella is pursuing a degree at Northern Virginia Community College, while working part-time.

The death of his father caused Luis to become very concerned for his widowed mother. As a result, he took a federal law enforcement job in the DC area in order to be in closer proximity to her.

Luis began attending Fellowship in April 2004. The warm welcome he received (and continues to receive) made him realize that Fellowship was the church where he could belong and have his spiritual needs fully addressed. He is serving the Lord through regular church attendance, prayer, and witnessing to coworkers. He is also looking forward to serving the church in a greater way in the days ahead, and has begun helping with church cleaning this month.

Luis' love of sports continued into adulthood; he is an avid Yankees fan and also enjoys football and basketball. He also plays on softball and basketball teams.

Luis asks that we pray for his family as they are facing medical issues of late. He also desires for both he and Kella to grow in their walk with the Lord.

Money Matters

The Lord continues to demonstrate His faithfulness through the generous giving of His people! Weekly General Fund giving averaged \$5,475 for the 4th Quarter, and \$5,377 for all of 2007, exceeding our weekly need for the year by about \$140.

50@1 contributions of \$10,027 together with regular mortgage payments and a Thanksgiving offering of \$3,804 resulted in a remarkable \$74,008 decrease in mortgage indebtedness during 2007, reducing our mortgage principle to \$158,185. *At this rate, Fellowship's mortgage could be eliminated by the end of 2009!*

| Mortgage Principle Reduction (per year) | |
|---|----------|
| 2003 | \$33,910 |
| 2004 | \$41,895 |
| 2005 | \$43,475 |
| 2006 | \$56,747 |
| 2007 | \$74,008 |

Based on strong giving this past year, the 2008 budget, approved at the December Annual Meeting, increases staff compensation to help with the cost of living and provide for retirement. The budget also addresses the shortfalls of three of our missionary families through increased monthly support, and provides funds for projects to maintain the church building.

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| December Giving Per Week (General Fund) | \$5,019 |
| Weekly Need | \$5,238 |
| 2007 Total Giving (General Fund) | \$279,604 |
| 2007 Budgeted Need | \$272,376 |
| 2007 Total 50@1 Giving | \$10,027 |

Calendar



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| Jan. 8 | Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM) |
| Jan. 18 | Women's Game Night (7:00 PM) |
| Jan. 19 | Men's Breakfast (8:00 AM) |
| Jan. 20 | Missionary Visit—Becky Courliss |
| Jan. 28 | Youth Ski Trip |
| Jan. 30 | January Annual Meeting (7:30 PM) |
| Feb. 8 | Women's Heart Friend Party (7:00 PM) |