

## Weekly Connector: The Best Seat in the House!

August 2, 2018

Hello, Church!

After a week of the NEO Campmeeting, I can say that I have been revived! I so appreciate the evangelists and others who invested themselves into us and thank God for the lessons and insights from God's Word which they shared. I especially remember Wednesday evening's message from Dr. Horace Shepherd, Jr. from Matthew 20:20-28. The takeaway? "The best seat in the house is the seat of service." In effect, Jesus offers this seat to us as it is His to give.

*Jesus came NOT to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. (v28)*



This seat represents not only our opportunities to serve on a Sunday (to teach, or to play or sing, or to greet, etc.). No, the seat of service is one that is available all week long and in every moment. Listening and being present when others are speaking can be an act of service. Calling folks by their names and praying for them can be an act of service. Making sure you have enough cash left over for a generous tip if you are served at a restaurant. Checking in on a neighbor. Calling or texting a friend.

In short, service is wrapped up in humbling ourselves before God and before others. As Paul writes to the church in Philippi, "...in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others." Phil. 2:3-4

Please join me in this adventure as we each look for ways to take the best seat in the house - the seat of service, every day.

Once again, I am glad for revival because, as I suspected, opportunities to be spiritually challenged abound. Yesterday morning, we all were surprised to discover that our Lori Gastin passed away in her home. She had not been feeling well and little did any of us know how serious her health had become.

When Sherry and I arrived at the church some years ago, Lori warmly welcomed us. She took us out to dinner to get to know us. She gave gifts both large and small. In fact, on my desk is a drawing she gave me just last week that represents our recent "Salt and Light" sermon series. It's beautiful and deserving of a frame.

I was her "buddy" that she loved to tease and "give a hard time to". In fact, she repeatedly told me how convinced she was that if she did not "give me a hard time", somehow I would become concerned she no longer loved me. We both enjoyed wearing Birkenstocks (sandals) but she would wear them all year - even in the Northeast Ohio winters. She did not like socks and rarely wore them - making sure I noticed. Yes, I believe each of those who know Lori would agree: she is "one of a kind".



And now, I am convinced that there was a sweet celebration upon her arrival in heaven - with her Savior, in Whom she placed her complete trust, and then with her parents, Jack and Barb, with whom she often longed to be.

We will celebrate her life on Wednesday, August 8th at 11am in the Sanctuary of East Canton Church of God. Calling hours will be an hour before. If you are able, please come.

This Sunday, we continue what we started last week regarding "Jesus and the Law". We learned that Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets - completes them like the final, crucial "piece of the puzzle" that enables the picture to be seen in all its beauty and intricacies. This week, we begin to discover what that fulfillment means in practice as Jesus helps us better understand how anger can lead to something far worse. This Word may be a life-changer for you or someone you know. Please be sure to invite a friend, come early, bring your Bible, and celebrate Jesus together as His church.

I love you, Church!

Pastor greg

