



The 4th Focus

“Disciplines for Lazy Summer Days”

God repeatedly commands his people to intentionally pursue holiness or godliness—becoming more like Jesus. God knows we need all kinds of help in getting there and so he provides his Spirit to work in us and nourishes us with the gospel. But, how can we open ourselves up to his Spirit’s working and this gospel nourishment? The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to “train yourself to be godly.” This training might be compared to the intense discipline necessary for a soldier to be ready for battle. Paul repeatedly instructs believers to strain and press on toward the goal (Philippians 3:12-14).

And then there’s summer in Michigan. On this past Sunday, our first really warm Sunday, Ruth and I drove to Grand Haven to check out the arts festival and walk the beach, boardwalk and pier. The beach was flooded with scantily-clad, pale-skinned people—many with a red glow that will keep dermatologists securely employed for years to come. You might think that the Western Michigan population had been released from prison. I understand all of this myself. I was one of the “crazies” out there in the sun (although not scantily clad). I struggle and chafe in my office chair trying to study (and write articles like this) when the sun is shining and a gentle breeze is blowing the notes off my desk. It’s easy for us to cast off restraint and just run free for a few months until school starts again and the leaves begin to turn.

And this is my concern for all of us. Some of us struggle with discipline, intensity or just lean toward some laziness to begin with. But now, as the lazy days of summer arrive in Michigan, we all can really struggle with the discipline and intensity that must be maintained for the sake of godliness or spiritual health. And this struggle with discipline and intensity can adversely affect our families and church family as well.

So, for example, the discipline of prayer, Scripture reading or a devotional time with the kids can escape us during the summer. Do you find it more difficult to set aside the time and energy necessary to read, study and meditate on God’s Word on these long, warm days of summer? What about the discipline of worship? As we repeatedly retreat to tents or cottages, we also often retreat from God’s prescription for nourishment through the gospel and his Spirit.

We are called to the discipline of friendship or fellowship. The author to the Hebrews commanded believers to not neglect meeting together and exhorted them to be faithful in extending hospitality (10:25; 13:2). Michigan’s lazy summer days can lead to a smaller, inward focus on a few family members and friends while we neglect neighbors and church family. And so we have to be very intentional with our efforts to meet together for the sake of nurturing and encouraging one another—especially during what are some challenging times for many of our brothers and sisters.

A waning in the discipline of giving, particularly for the ministry of our church family, becomes evident during the summer as our receipts go down. And now, as we have church family members who are struggling financially, this discipline becomes particularly important for everyone of us. Our tendency during these challenging economic times, might be to focus on caring for self. God’s intent for our giving, in part, is that we become re-oriented to acknowledge God as our first Giver and faithful Provider. This financial and God-in-the-center re-orientation is essential for our spiritual health and it is vital for the financial and ministry health of our congregation.

So, enjoy the freedom of summer. But don’t let it crowd out and thus suffocate your joy and freedom in the gospel. We are called to intentional and intense disciplines that lead to joy and freedom that are much sweeter than we will ever find in the best of our lazy summer days.

- Pastor Tim

- 2 - Julie Schalk
- 3 - Caren Bills
- 5 - Lorraine Smith
- 8 - Dawn Faasse
- 9 - Brandon Gleason
- 13 - Laura O'Brock
- 14 - Eric O'Brock
- 14 - Sam Tubergen
- 16 - Trish Studebaker
- 16 - Barb Hodgson
- 19 - June DeVries
- 23 - Betsy Coutchie
- 24 - Marty Pyper
- 24 - Leslie Hawkins
- 28 - Becky Berrevoets
- 28 - Linda Randall
- 28 - Roy Giron
- 29 - Katherine Ring



July

- 1 - Kari Bierens
- 2 - Jerry Wierenga
- 8 - Connie Larson
- 11 - Anne Nordyke
- 13 - Teresa DeBoer
- 14 - Ed Reitsma
- 19 - C. Vander Heide
- 22 - Jonathan Brinks
- 23 - Avery Gleason
- 26 - Erica Fles
- 28 - Jon O'Brock
- 29 - Alyssa Fahner



June

- 2 - Tom Adams
- 3 - Charlton Meyer
- 3 - Tim Meendering
- 5 - Connie Scherpenisse
- 8 - Joyce Van Neurren
- 12 - Rick Berthiaume
- 12 - Alexis Springfield
- 14 - Steve Springfield
- 15 - Betty Webster
- 17 - Darold Parks
- 20 - Ke Rossiter
- 21 - Amy Adams
- 22 - Jacob Tubergen
- 23 - Bertha Vander Velde
- 25 - Amber Studebaker
- 26 - Joel Adams
- 30 - Pam Kriekard
- 31 - Jeff Springfield

August Birthdays



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Let's Play Ball!

June

25 - Bye

July

9 - 6:30 Diamond 1

16 - 7:20 PM Diamond 6

23 - 7:20 PM Diamond 5

30 - 6:30 PM Diamond 1

August

6 - Bye

13 - Rain Date

Come on out to the Christian Reformed Rec Center and cheer on our men's softball team!!



Upcoming Dates

June 22 - Breaktime Begins!

June 25 - Playgroup at Aberdeen Park 10:30 AM

July Missions - Evangelical School of Poland - offering July 19

July 8 - Playgroup at Frog Hollow 10:30 AM

July 12 - Communion

July 22 - Kids Hope Summer Outing 3:00 PM

July 23 - Playgroup at Richmond Park 1:00 PM

August Missions - Bruce & Jan Smith - offering August 16

August 5 - Playgroup at Kent Hills School 10:30 AM

August 20 - Playgroup at Ken-O-Sha Park 10:30 AM

Did you know that the **Bible Study on Tuesday mornings** is just not for women? Join them at 10:00 AM throughout the summer as they study the book of Acts.

Happy Father's Day!

I ♥ DAD'



Remember God's Blessings
this

Independence Day

A Decade Reflection



As I sat down to write this article, this thought kept coming back to me – “How has my life changed through 10 years of serving as a Kids Hope director?” So, here are my reflections on that.

First of all, where has the time gone? It has flown by. To give perspective on that – my son Brian was only 3 years old when I began this journey. Wow! Kids Hope has given me tools on how to mentor a child, including my own son. Through trainings, seminars and mentoring I have learned about brain development, stressors on children, how children learn differently and cycles of childhood development to name a few.

Kids Hope has opened my eyes for those who struggle. Before Kids Hope I didn't really realize the struggles that many children and adults deal with everyday. These include, but are not limited to poverty, lack of parental involvement, living with utilities being shut-off – no heat, electric or water, not having enough food, not sure where they will be staying tonight – things that I just take for granted. Kids Hope has given me compassion for those who struggle and a willingness to want to make a difference in other people's lives.

Kids Hope has given me, and many others, a way to be “Jesus with skin on” – to show the love of Christ to those who may not otherwise see it, and to pray for these children and their families. To be His hands and feet! To sit next to a child who is struggling and help them understand an assignment, or how to handle their anger, or to be a listening ear, or to just play a game and have fun!

In a nutshell – Kids Hope has broken my heart and given me more compassion and joy in serving that I ever thought possible. I have seen the heartaches of children and parents, and I have seen the smiles and been the recipient of many hugs! I have seen Christ working through us to bring people to himself. What an encouragement, and a faith-builder. God is at work and he is using us to be his instruments to bring hope to those who struggle.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to have served as the Kids Hope director for the past 10 years and for how God has used this ministry to change my life and the lives of many others.

If you are up for a life changing experience – please give me a call – I would love to talk to you about the possibility of you becoming a part of this wonderful ministry.

Thankful for the journey,
Mary Kay Townley

Q - Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A - Samson, he brought the house down.

Q - Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A - Noah, he was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q - Who was the most flagrant law-breaker in the Bible?

A - Moses, he broke all 10 commandments at once.



A little boy opened the big and old family Bible with fascination, and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between the pages.

“Momma, look what I found,” the boy called out. “What have you got there, dear?” his mother asked. With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: “I think it's Adam's suit!”

**A PUBLICATION OF
FOURTH
REFORMED CHURCH**



1226 Union Ave. N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Pastor Tim Meendering
Phone: 454-1561
www.fourthchurch.com

Sunday Service
9:30 AM

**Family Fellowship
Lifeline Groups**
5:00 PM

Christian Education
11:15 AM

Our Vision

Seeking to be a joyful,
welcoming
community that is
transformed by the gospel
and nurtured in God's
Word, and led by His
Spirit - to redeem the
city and beyond."

**A COMMUNITY REDEEMED TO
REDEEM OUR COMMUNITY**

New City Neighbors - Eric Schalk



It's summer.

Normally I have a break between the end of the school year ministries and Breaktime, but not this year. Last week (June 10), New City Neighbors had it's first ever fundraiser, so instead of preparing for Breaktime, I spent a bunch of time prepping for our Spring Benefit Concert. While it was a ton of work, it was worth it. We had over 150 people come out for a night of great music and dessert. John and Gwen Varineau provided amazing entertainment through a clarinet and piano duet. Throughout the evening we used a series of videos, a testimony and a plea for action to introduce people to New City Neighbors and invite them to be involved. The night went well and we added numerous people to our mailing list and gained some great financial footing.

It's summer now.

That was eight days ago, in four days Breaktime begins (as I write this on Thursday.) It looks as though we're going to have a well attended program this year. We have twelve kids signed up for the bakery and over twenty signed up for the regular Breaktime program. Erin Meendering is returning for her fourth year as a staff member, and Mark Wiersma (Julie's brother) is joining us for his first. Mark is actually moving in with me, Julie, Abbie, Josh and soon-to-arrive-baby, which will make for a full house.

Oh boy, it's summer.

I'm excited about what lies ahead, but I know this is going to be an intense summer. It will also be a summer where I need to trust God a lot. Of all the times to have a baby, the middle of Breaktime was not the best choice. It's hard for me to let go and rest in the fact that everything will be fine while I'm out, but I know God is bigger than me and I have to rest in that.

Summer will be done soon.

I'm not saying I'm ready for fall. What I'm saying is that once Breaktime starts, the summer flies by at such record speed that it feels like I missed it. If that sounds weird, come work Breaktime for a summer, you'll know what I mean. Breaktime is an amazing opportunity to connect with kids, build lasting relationships, consistently teach about Christ, eat great food, and explore the world. Each day is a fresh chance to see God at work and bask in his goodness.

If you haven't experienced Breaktime, now is the time. It's one thing to hear about it on Sunday, or see pictures in a video, it's a whole other thing to see it in action, connect with a child and eat something tasty from the bakery. Consider this your invitation to check it out through bringing a meal, reading with a child, buying something from the bakery, or just coming down and spending time with the kids.

It's summer, come experience a program that's making a difference in our community.