

Summer Sabbath Resources for Adults

Volume 1, Issue 6

July 18, 2010

By Thad Broome

"Comfort in Distress"

Bible Text: Please read Philippians 2:25-30 aloud from your favorite translation.

Devotional Thought

Three facts of life that relate to our spiritual well-being occurred to me after reading and studying the above scripture. One concerns the sacrifice that many have made in living and sharing the gospel message. Another is the comfort that we can give to others by being sensitive to their needs; and a third is the power of positive encouragement and affirmation.

Neither Ginny nor I have been physically harmed nor seriously emotionally distressed in our effort to live out our faith. But we do live among others

who carry out their faith in stark contrast, and sometimes in direct confrontation, to our understanding of Christian behavior, and this causes pain. This is reason for us to appreciate the suffering of the early Christians and of those living and working for Christ in hostile situations.

Paul was concerned about the anxiety of Epaphroditus and the members of the congregation of Philippi, as well as his own distress. Paul was willing to give up the immediate help and comfort of Epaphroditus and return him to his folks so that

they would have the assurance of his well-being and could rejoice together. What a joy it is for our church to welcome home members who have been separated from us by illness or for other reasons!

Paul's positive comments about the work and character of Epaphroditus are good lessons for us. He described Epaphroditus as "my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier." This attitude and the remarks of Paul surely strengthened and encouraged Epaphroditus. It can be a lesson for us to encourage and support others.

An Invitation to Prayer

Let us pray that we may be concerned with the unique challenge of living in a world where many may not feel and act as Christians; and may we work to ease the pain of our fellow Christians by offering our encouragement.

An Invitation to Service

Take advantage of opportunities to become involved with the outreach and ministry opportunities in our church.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

In what ways can we serve and give sacrificially for the gospel?

In what ways can we ease the pain of others?

In what ways can we give positive encouragement to others?