

“Will work for friends”

April 2008

Hymn What a friend we have in Jesus

Scripture Acts 4:32-37 and Galatians 5:13-15

Acts 4:32 “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything that they had.”

Gal 5:13 “You, my brothers, were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature, rather serve one another in love.

Prayer Let us pray – O God we thank you for friends, for those with whom we can work as true servants. We ask for your presence with us here and in all the places we meet together. Make keen our minds, warm our hearts and soft our tongues. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Reflection It was with a heavy feeling of dread and pain that I read name after name engraved on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. Then I saw that next to the memorial was a statue of three men – a black, a Hispanic and a white soldier. They were standing very close together. The tour guide, a former soldier who fought in Vietnam explained the significance of the statue. He said that there were more minorities fighting for the U.S. than ever before. The reason they were standing so close together was that in Vietnam they learned, like never before, how very much they needed each other.

We need to thank God that very few of us find ourselves in such perilous places with such grim conditions. We also need to thank God for the friends we have who are around and who meet the needs we have in our lives today.

Six friends have formed a home repair club in Minneapolis. They meet one Saturday each month at one of their homes to work on projects that cannot be tackled alone. Having helped one another for 20 years, they say they’re now bonded together like one big family. A similar group has formed in Snohomish, Washington. Their motto is “Will work for friends”.

The concern of these groups for their friends reminds me of the early church as illustrated in our readings from Acts and from Paul’s letter to the Galatians. During this time of great persecution of believers, they especially needed the support of one another. Some people voluntarily sold their lands or houses and brought the proceeds to the apostles, and they distributed to each as anyone had need. They were of one heart and had all things in common.

As followers of Christ today, we too need the spiritual support and encouragement of one another. We may be struggling with a decision about how to serve God, or concerned about a problem at work, or unsure of how to discipline a rebellious child. These are good opportunities to enlist the advice and prayer of fellow Christians such as fellow members of AOTS. Through love, let us serve one another – physically and spiritually – in the family of God.

(based on material from “Daily Bread”, “Hours of Power” by Robert Schuler and the Quiet Time Bible version of the NIV New Testament)

Discussion How is oneness in heart demonstrated in Acts 4:32-37?
 Would we behave similarly today? Why or why not?
 What is the difference between the two concepts of freedom described in
 Galatians 5:13-14?
 Would a “Will Work for Friends” group work for you in your church, your
 club, or your community?

Closing prayer Let us pray –
 You have never failed, God, to be our one essential, intimate friend.
 When we were lonely in striving - you encouraged us
 Lonely in struggling – you lifted us
 Lonely in serving – you supported us
 Lonely in suffering – you comforted us
 Lonely in sinning – you forgave us
 Lonely in sinking – you renewed us
 Lonely in succeeding – you rejoiced with us
 What a friend we have in Jesus.
 Thank you God. Amen.

Coming event Are you making plans for an AOTS Laymen’s service? – on Father’s Day?

Books of the month The book of Acts and Paul’s letter to the Galatians