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To: jodester32@twcny.rr.com
Subject: Today's devotion fresh from the vine

40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings
Submitted for your Digestion
October 7, 2005 Day 13

Introduction: We are all in *"this"* 2gether. No one is getting out alive. As we explore what it means to be in community through Rick Warren's better together it is essential that we tailor make this study to fit our communities. This devotional is meant to be a conversation starter. It is personal musings on the daily readings' subject. If another author is not noted then the opinions expressed are those of Jodi Haier and only reflect her understandings and her journey. If you do not wish to receive a devotional a day for the next 40 days, please respond to this email with a thoughtful "no, thank you" " **Instead of just forwarding this *please* send people's email to me. I am not trying to be a control freak but I want to know where God's going with this. People viewing this on the webpage can contact the webmaster with any comments. THANKS! Jodi**

Fellowship 2gether: "cultivating a life in common"

(1Cor 1:10) Let me update you on a Biloxi story. Remember the woman that was living in her car for a month? Well, Joe and company continued to bring her dinners and supplies. They established a relationship with Joan. She is living in her tent now and cleaning up her lot. Joe makes sure that her car is still running. They encouraged her to connect with her neighbors and now she happily states that it is hard to get work done with all these people stopping by to chat. Joan has also promised that she will go to church with Brenda. Brenda had warned her that her congregation is predominantly white. Joan doesn't care, she knows where the love is and it doesn't have a color. Relief and recovery has more to do with establishing relationships than filling a hand that is outstretched. Joan, Joe and Brenda have cultivated a life in common and will reap a life uncommon.

Grow 2gether: "accepting, affirming, and advising"

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16) Laughter provided by Kevin Schmadel, husband of Val and Friend Extraordinaire!

George Carlin's Views on Aging

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

"How old are you?" "I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.

"How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life . . . you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony . . . YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!!

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're Just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50

and your dreams are gone.

But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday!

You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I Was JUST 92."

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"
May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay "them "
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."
And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person, who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
- 9 Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity. But do share this with someone. We all need to live life to its fullest each day!!

Serve 2gether: “working 2gether with 1 heart & 1 purpose”

(Phil 2:2) Will your service involve Death and Dying? Will your group require grief counseling? The answer should be a resounding, “YES!” Pastor Marilyn and I were in a college class yesterday. One of the students asked, “How can we stay focused on what is important when everyone keeps telling us what we HAVE to do?” I shared how the Biloxi team had many relationships at home that needed tending. They had pressing obligations that they left behind in order to serve. To answer their concerns I explained how when they lost themselves in the service of others they would find those things that were most important. Mark 8: 35b “those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel will save it.” The team lost their life of appointments and responsibilities. They connected with people and had to leave them in the midst of their distress. They are grieving for these people. They have experienced a little death of self. They must transition into this new life that can never be the same. Some obligations will fall away and other relationships will be lifted and honored. As we look at our service project, we need to understand that we are being asked to stare death in its eye and shout, “Oh, Death where is your sting?” (Romeo and Juliet? Shakespeare definitely) Anything else is just playing around.

Worship 2gether: “come 2gether in my name”

(Matt 18:20) p. 60 “...they were in a place of holy mystery, that God was at work among them. They were quietly worshipful – and then noisily grateful, calling out among themselves, ‘God is back, looking to the needs of his people!’” (Luke 7:16 The Message) Where is the mystery in our worship? Aren't we just a bunch of mostly harmless people doing some good in an unfair world? I was asked what the difference was between humanism and Methodism. I replied that they have many similarities; but just when man (in the gender-neutral sense) thinks he has conquered, explained, cured, rectified, and proven everything known, more is revealed. Just when everything makes sense, God shows up and says, “A-Ha but what about this?” There is an end of us. We are not the biggest and best. There is something larger than even our combined consciousness. And its entirety is unable to be fathomed, thus it is the mystery. Yet, I go back to my original question. Where is the mystery in our worship? Where do we come to the end of us into that place of Holy mystery? When is worship an end to knowing and an experience of faith? Sorry, folks I don't have the answers. It may be enough that we ask the questions.

Reach Out 2gether: “get others to believe”

(Phil 1:27) What makes you a reliable source? Why would anyone believe you? I went door to door one Sunday after church in East Schuyler. I had leftover Pentecost plants that I wanted to have good homes. I went to the trailer park next to the church and started knocking on doors. I just said hi and offered them a plant. I was never rejected. I was even invited into some houses sight unseen. I helped one woman with her groceries. I prayed with another couple about their daughter who had cancer. I laughed with children and strolled down the road. By the time I had run out of flowers, people had started to expect me. They just didn't know what to make of me. Was I insane? Those of you that know me, know the answer to that question; since you've asked it so often. There is a certain safety in insanity. If you don't look dangerous, people can accept anything because they can scoff at it and say, “Well, she was crazy.” What makes me a reliable source to testify to God's love and Jesus' plan for salvation? Why would anyone believe me when

I talk about the strength of the Holy Spirit? Maybe it's because I'm crazy.

****Mission prayers****

Lord- Thank you for bringing our team safely back into the bosom of their Northern family. Let their stories become our stories, their pain become our pain, their grief and healing become our victory scars. Lord move us where we need to be. Speak to our hearts and minds. Send your holy spirit as an ambassador to show us the ways to serve you. Let our lives be the light in this world. Let the angels dance to the songs we bring to comfort those who cry out. We thank you for all the opportunities you place in our lives. Give us the strength to grab them. It is Jesus' precious name that we pray. Amen.