



Campus Vitals

Winter/Spring 2008

A newsletter from Nurses Christian Fellowship
for nursing students

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Encouraging Words

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith... Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. -Hebrews 10:22-25

*see devotional to accompany this passage at the end

Student Groups in Action

In each issue of *Campus Vitals*, we share what some groups are doing in various parts of the US, so you can get ideas for your group. Newer groups may wonder what ideas have been previously shared. You can now access past issues at <http://www.ncf-jcn.org/publications.html>. Under the Campus Vitals header, you will see a link to archived issues. Enjoy!



Louisiana

When emailing the NCF group announcements, one student leader at Louisiana State University, Irielle, has been attaching encouraging devotions under the umbrella title "Good News". Among the topics this semester, Irielle has focused on faith and perseverance - definitely applicable for nursing students!

The LSU NCF group went to Methodist Home for Children on October 20th. They had a day of games, music, and fun with the kids. They also had a chance to go with the kids to the Aquarium of Americas in New Orleans.

The group is planning a mission trip to Mexico. They desire to set up temporary clinics in churches and buy medicine for the local doctor. They will be able to give free healthcare, practice their Spanish, and pray over the patients.



In addition to community and national outreach projects, they also reach out to fellow students. They make verses on label paper and place them on candy for students during finals and when they go to share about NCF at local colleges.



Illinois

The NCF group at the University of IL at Chicago tried something new around Thanksgiving. As students and staff entered the school of nursing building, they were offered free baked goods in exchange for each person writing down something for which he/she was thankful.



59 pieces of paper with words of thanksgiving were collected! Reading the responses has helped the NCF leaders see new ways that they can be praying for the students, faculty, and staff in the college of nursing.

"We also were able to tell students about our weekly NCF gatherings for prayer and Bible study as they inquired about who we were and why we were giving things away!"



Michigan

The NCF group at Calvin College ended the semester with a Christmas social and went caroling at a nearby retirement center. Twelve students came out on a very blustery winter evening to bless the residents.



California

Over the past few years, the NCF group at San Jose State University has been growing. One student leader made this observation: "The discussions have been really good because hearts have been touched and the members have shared their hearts with the group and you can see how God is working in their lives---NCF is a place of safety and comfort."

A freshman who is new to the group had this testimony:

"Hello! I went to the last NCF meeting. I love sharing what I know about Jesus Christ and the Bible with others. Exams are shaking my faith, but I'm trying hard to stay strong. I've ran to my Strong Tower and though my faith is being tested, I still feel peace. Throughout the weekend I was able to experience unspeakable joy despite my exams. Thank you so much for your friendliness and support! NCF makes my faith stronger."

Prayer Requests

LSU - Over the Christmas break, they sold dinners at a church to raise money for the Mexico Mission Trip (May 31st-June9th). Please join them in prayer that God would bless them with the money to buy the medicines needed and help them with their ministry to the Mexican people.

Please join senior nursing students who are praying that God would raise up leaders to take their place to continue the NCF group at their school next year. (You may be the answer to this prayer at your school.)

Pray for NCF staff who will be at the NSNA convention - that God would lead them in the conversations they have with students, faculty, and exhibitors and that God would be praised through these interactions.

New JCN Feature for Students

The *Journal of Christian Nursing* has added a new column for students called **Student TXT**. It is designed to encourage, challenge and help nursing students wrestle with current issues. More information can be found at the NCF homepage - www.ncf-jcn.org.

NSNA Convention

The annual NSNA convention will be held this year in Grapevine, TX - March 26-29. Once again Skip McDonald will be holding workshops and NCF will have a display. Skip's workshop title will be "**Footprints to Spiritual Care**". So, if you or other classmates plan to attend, look for the NCF display table and Skip's workshop! More convention information can be found at <http://www.nсна.org/meetings/convention.asp>.

Annual Survey Announcement

Every spring, usually in April, NCF sends an online survey to group leaders and faculty advisors. We ask for information such as how many were involved in your group, what activities the group did, who will be the group contact for the next school year - things that help NCF staff know how to best plan and serve you.

We also ask for contact information for the seniors in your group. NCF has some special "graduation gifts", and it is easiest to email them details. It is best to have their permission before giving NCF their names and contact information, so we are asking that in one of your next meetings, please provide a sign-up sheet for those graduating in spring to list their name and email address if they would like to receive the information from NCF. Then you will have this available when the survey is sent to you. Thanks for your help!

Encouraging Words Devotional

In Bible College, we called Hebrews 10:22-25 the "salad" passage - because there is so much "let us" (lettuce). ☺ It is really easy to separate the encouragement and exhortation in this passage by the repetition of the words "let us".

The writer of Hebrews is not telling the audience of the letter "you should" do something, but rather includes himself personally in need of the instruction as well by using the pronoun "us".

So, "let us" look at the nuggets in this passage:

Let us:

- 1) draw near to God
 - 2) hold unswervingly to the hope we profess
 - 3) consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds
 - 4) not give up meeting together
 - 5) encourage one another
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- 1) In the greater context of the chapter, the author points out how Jesus' sacrifice for us has opened a way for us to know God personally. The Jewish people, since Old Testament times, received atonement or forgiveness of their sins by the priest offering a sacrifice for them. The sacrifices had to be made again and again. Now, Jesus is our perfect sacrifice, once and for all. So, we are now encouraged to "draw near to God" with confidence and assurance of faith, because we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

I think it is significant that drawing near to God is first in this list. It shows the importance of a daily relationship with God. It is only through a close relationship with Christ that He can use us in ministry to others. Often Bible study and prayer come to mind when thinking of ways to draw near to God. *What other ways can you develop a closer relationship with God?* No matter how busy you are with school, I encourage you to take some quiet time with the Lord each day!

- 2) Having a close relationship with Christ helps us "hold unswervingly to the hope we profess" because He is faithful. There may be times that we doubt. Take that as a challenge to dig deeper to find the answers you seek. Your faith will be stronger in the end.

In nursing school, nursing practice and life you will experience many things that test your faith or make you thankful for your faith. I encourage new grads to keep a journal so they can look back and see how God has brought them through difficult times.

What other ways can you think of to "hold unswervingly to the hope you profess?"

- 3) Sometimes it is easier for us to see the gifts and abilities of others. However, sometimes our own busyness keeps us from taking the time to communicate these observations to others. Think of your closest friends. *How can you "spur one another along to love and good deeds"?* Write down your friends' names and one or two ways that you can "spur them on" this next week. Maybe there is a project that your NCF group or small group can work on together that is "others centered" - so you can share that love and those good deeds with others. Be creative!
- 4) Having a personal relationship with Christ, strong faith and love/good deeds for others are all good things. Once we are rooted in Christ we can reach out to others. Scripture encourages us to not be a "lone ranger" Christian, but that it important to "not give up meeting together". We need others and they need us.

Busy school schedules, studying for exams, the need for extracurricular activity time and many other things have their place, but can crowd out connecting time with other Christians. Often nurses have to work weekends - after all, people are ill on Sundays, too. *How can you connect with other believers despite your schedule? Do you have a church you are "plugged into"? How can you be faithfully involved with a NCF small group Bible study? What other ways can you connect?*

- 5) The last action we are exhorted to do is to "encourage one another". If we are growing in our faith and relationship with God, if we are thinking about others and if we are connecting with others, encouraging them should flow naturally. *How do we discover if others around us are discouraged or struggling?* I've been hearing about many nursing students becoming discouraged by the demands of nursing school. *How can we come along side them and encourage them? What helps you when you are discouraged? A listening ear and someone who sincerely cares? A friend who will pray for you? Someone who communicates that they believe you can do it?* I often find that in encouraging others, I am blessed in return.

In looking at each of these "let us" nuggets, note that each of them build on the others. They are a good model to follow for our spiritual growth - being who God wants us to be.

I hope that you have many ideas of how you can put these steps into practice in your everyday life. Write down specific areas that need your attention. Indicate steps you plan to take to improve in these areas. Then don't forget to jot down how you have seen God work through you. I'm praying for you!