

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update april 2013

We serve a God of exchange. I think this is one of the attributes of God that I am most grateful for. Let me clarify what I mean by “exchange”. When I began to surrender to the Lord I didn’t have much to give Him except for my sin and brokenness. Sixteen years ago, I had just begun to confront my sexual struggles and relational dysfunction, and even though I knew that what I had been holding onto was worthless, it was scary to imagine what I would be left with if I gave those things up. What I have learned over the last sixteen years is that God is faithful to His Word, and that the words of Isaiah 61 are His assurance to us of what He intends to do with our sacrifices. Isaiah 61 starts off with these words:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.”

Beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, praise instead of despair... this is what I mean by “exchange”. I am constantly astounded at how the Lord takes our mistakes, failures, and our destructive decisions, and somehow through His sovereignty and grace, gives us beauty, joy, and a reason to praise. I have so many examples of this in my own life that I am sure I could fill a year’s worth of newsletters; and I continue to see God growing more and more of His blessings out of the soil of my surrendered sin.

I think that this work of God is the source of one of my greatest joys in serving at Portland Fellowship. Throughout the year, we as a staff get to witness God moving powerfully in the lives of men and women to whom we minister. One of the settings that gives us a front row seat to this amazing work of exchange is our annual retreat with our Taking Back Ground participants. On March 8th, we headed to the Breakaway Lodge (a Young Life facility on the



Our intern Cody taking communion at our annual retreat.

“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners.”

ISAIAH 61 : 1

Oregon coast), ready to what our participants respond to God's invitation to this work of exchange. The retreat builds to the Surrender service on Saturday night, a time when confession and prayer fill the room as our participants come up to the microphone and literally lay down objects and symbols of idolatry. Each person who surrendered an idol that evening did so, wanting to be free to trust that God would be true to his Word, forgive them and cleanse them; and ultimately, trust that what He has for them is better than the worthless idols they have held on to. This is the soil of surrendered sin that the Lord makes His planting, for the display of His splendor.

Please pray for this work of God. In my life this exchange was not instantaneous, but rather was a slow, continuous exchange that required constant surrender. This is a constant act of faith, and as with any other step of faith, the enemy of our souls will challenge it at every opportunity. Already, only a few weeks after this event, I have met with participants who have been tempted to abandon this journey and cling to the tangible idols they left at the foot of the cross. Pray that our participants will choose to trust in the faithful character of God who is able, willing and ready to give them beauty for ashes.

In Christ,



Drew Berryessa
Program Manager

prayer requests

We, as a staff, value your prayer support greatly. We cannot sustain this work without the prayer support of those who agree with the redemptive work of Jesus that happens in the walls of Portland Fellowship. Please join us in prayer for the following requests this month:

...for the returning TBG participants. Ask God to help each person to dig in deeply to this last session's materials and to continue walking through the joys and frustrations of this healing process.

...for the Lord's protection to rest on our leaders, staff and supporters. As each person gives of themselves, we ask that God would provide rest, strength, and joy in the service to all who come to PF looking for help.

...for the Upper Room Interns. That God would help them make the most of the last two months of their program, and that he would lead and direct them for their next steps in life and discipleship.

...for more opportunities to open up for the staff to share the mission and message of Portland Fellowship with the greater Body of Christ.

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events calendar

monday nights april

Upper Room Program
Our Upper Room interns will be working on a capstone project finishing out the last two months of their program.

tuesday nights april

Taking Back Ground
Discipleship program for men and women who struggle with same-sex attraction. Call the office if you are interested in attending.

april 12

Family and Friends Group
For those who have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement, and personal support. 6:30 p.m.

**speakers,
counseling and youth support:**
can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com