

St. Andrew's (JKP) Monthly Newsletter  
*January, 2012*

Edification: *"To everything; turn, turn, turn - there is a season; turn, turn, turn and a time for every purpose under Heaven".* It's so cool the bible quoted that old Byrd's song in the book of Ecclesiastes, isn't it? With biblical literacy what it is in our nation today some might actually give a hearty "amen brother" to that testimonial. In any event there's no escaping the palpable wisdom of that concept. There's a season and a time for every purpose under Heaven. And the beginning of a New Year is a good time to take stock of the season and time in which we find ourselves as well as consider the purpose for which we're living. In nature we see the seasons change in vivid fashion at regular intervals. These intervals are not regular because we inhabit a never-ending cyclical system, but because God makes it so. So too we see a purpose in nature that belies the materialists fantasy that all we see is all there is. Year in and year out the Earth sustains the living. It provides food and shelter, clothing and comfort. Does it do so of its own accord? Is this not also because God makes it so? So since the season and purpose of nature is evident to us, what about us? Is our own season and purpose that evident to us? Further and more importantly, are we living at peace with our season and in conformity to our purpose? Can we even answer these questions satisfactorily? Is it possible? Since seasons ebb and flow methodically in nature will it be the same in our lives? Can we discover with conviction the real purpose for which we're living? I don't mean to get all existential, but positioned at the front edge of this New Year can we assess where we're already standing and determine if we are in fact living seasonably and with purpose? Or is that kind of personal reflection and self-assessment for the Byrds after all?

*"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness" - 2Corinthians 9:10*

Encourage: Well, it *does say* in Ecclesiastes 3:1 "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." So as we begin this New Year in what season do you find yourself? Is it a season of lingering affliction? Whether physical or spiritual, as though you can separate one from the other, has a heavy and sharp affliction come to rest upon you or a loved one, or both? And what if the affliction is *between* you and a loved one? Is that not a bitter season all of itself? Is yours a season of temptation? Has an old "besetting sin" come to crouch again at your doorstep? Or perhaps a new unexpected temptation has crossed your path that once-upon-a-time may not have even registered, but now it seems all too irresistible. Possibly "life" has not turned out as you hoped and prayed. Your family, your marriage, your progress in the life of spirituality, your career - or countless other aspirations just hasn't turned out as planned. Why? Where is God in all that? Has He not heard? Does He not care? Is my faith not genuine? These are very trying seasons and there's a theme, isn't there? We live in the season of "the vale of tears". With tears we endure all manner of afflictions. With tears we resist the unrelenting temptations with which we're beset. Or when we fail to resist and fall prey to temptation with tears we confess and seek grace to repent. And the trials of faith that at times seem to suffocate us illicit fresh tears from weary eyes. Thus is our season. What could possibly be the purpose? It is to be "conformed to the image of His Son", the Son who "though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience through what He suffered". So we inhabit a season of suffering for the purpose of learning obedience. But this season too will *"turn, turn, turn"*. Comes then the eternal season with every tear wiped away. And that season, like the Lord of it bears no shadow of turning!