

## Visiting

One of the distinguishing characteristics of a loving and friendly congregation is the interaction between the members. We observe Karns members staying and talking for twenty, thirty minutes or even longer after worship services. However, sometimes our interactions within our church family can be superficial, not unlike viewing a green meadow from a high mountain overlook where we cannot see the dead plants and barren places.

James wrote that *pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the widows and orphans in their trouble* (James 1:27a). The term "visit" in this verse implies more than just a social call – it includes helping those we visit with their physical and spiritual needs as well. We cannot adequately fulfill this responsibility unless we know the members of our spiritual family, and we cannot get to know one another just by talking in the foyer before and after services. Visiting members' homes is a better way to get to know them, their families and relatives.

When we visit members in their homes we get to know the particular needs and troubles they are enduring in their Christian walk. Those members of the congregation who are on our prayer list or are unable to attend services regularly (like our "shut-ins"), especially need visits from their spiritual brothers and sisters. Visiting in the homes of our brothers and sisters is also a time to share our mutual concerns, needs and wishes with each other. By visiting our brothers and sisters in Christ we not only obey James' admonition, we are strengthened as well.

Visiting our brothers and sisters is a source of great encouragement to the one visiting. We are encouraged when those we visit say "don't leave now" or "please stay a little while longer" at the first suggestion that the time to leave is near. Hearing one of our "shut-ins" say "please come back soon" or "don't wait so long between visits" should be a reminder to us just how important visiting really is to our family members.

Why not visit a brother or sister this week?

For the elders,  
Don Denton