



**"No Cross,  
No Crown"**

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# The Cross and Crown

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We don't always know what's going on in people's lives, do we?

Our most First Friday Prayer night consisted of an extended period of prayer, where individuals and families found a place to pray, and the pastors circulated among them to talk about about their lives a bit and then to pray with them. We met with individuals aged 5 to 60 years. There was nothing scandalous or even shocking discussed, but we *were* surprised to hear some of the burdens that our friends were carrying.

People have a tendency to "mask," even around close friends; to put on a peaceful or happy face when they're actually struggling on the inside. There are many reasons for masking, including

of judgment, or simply

burden to others. How

know that we don't

God! We can be

In the first place, it

sense to try to mask

God, since he knows

The more glorious

we don't need to mask,

us unconditionally. Yes, God's holiness – and our love for him – compel us to guard our steps, but we don't need to tread lightly from a fear of being rejected by him. There is, after all, no fear in love, because perfect love drives out fear. (1 John 4:18)



embarrassment, fear not wanting to be a wonderful it is to have to mask with completely genuine. would make no our true selves from everything about us. truth, though, is that because God loves

We must not be too embarrassed to come to God after we have messed up, nor should we fear rejection: He loves us. And we need not hold things in for fear of burdening him with our problems: He cares for us, and wants us to cast all our cares on him. (1 Peter 5:7)

In this, as in all areas, Jesus is our example. May we be so loving as to convince others that they can be drop their masks and be honest with us. And may we be so caring that others will feel liberty share their burdens with us. In God's plan, we're all in this together: all parts of one body, working in unison in the service of the same Head.

*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. (...) you are familiar with all my ways.*

*(Psalm 139:1,3)*

# Thanks for Praying!

We're in the homestretch for 2023! This final month is crucial – thanks so much for praying with us! Please remember:







Celebrating the season at our Family ADVENTure day!

- our Christmas outreaches in the community,
- many in our community struggling with housing and heat,
- discipling new believers, and
- planning and provision for the new year.

## We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list\*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying about, please let us know.

Thanks so much to those who keep in touch! It's so encouraging to hear from you!

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\* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or drop us a note, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know!

## Did you know?

When they're incubating their eggs, chinstrap penguins take "micro naps" so that they can stay alert against predators. The naps are, on average, four seconds long, and they take upwards of 10,000 of them in a day, for a total of eleven hours of sleep!

**He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. (Psalm 121:3,4)**



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