

HEARTS AT HOME

Summer fun planning



Holly Schurter

▶ **A game shelf.** Include old standbys like Monopoly or Scrabble. Don't forget card games—Canasta or Hearts can keep kids interested for hours at a time. Outdoor games like croquet or badminton provide exercise and fun all at once. Encourage the kids to practice on their own, but get in on the fun with a family tournament in the evening.

▶ **Backyard water play.** Set up the sprinkler or create your own water table with tubs of water on the picnic table. Supply bubble wands, plastic colanders and measuring cups, and some bubble soap. To get in on the fun, turn washing the car or the dog into a water fight.

▶ **A sand box.** Is there a better place for big trucks or old Jell-O molds? You need a sandbox, clean sand, (check out the lawn and garden department of your home supply store) and a lid for the sandbox when the kids aren't using it, so neighborhood pets won't use it as a litter box. Add a little wa-

By the Rev. Brad Bryant
FOR THE PANTAGRAPH

God loves you unconditionally. This is the solid testimony of scripture writers and millions of Jesus' faithful followers. It's an important reminder when illness, pain, stress or depression strikes. The God who purposely created you will continue to invest in you. You are of great worth and importance to your God.

Sickness is when we most need our personal, loving God, and when it is difficult to remember that relationship. While other people's testimonies of God's love may help, we need to make our own personal approach to God, reinforcing that relationship. Prayer is a very proper, personal approach to God.

In times of deep personal need, though, God also recognizes the importance of earthly friends supporting and building our faith. Some of these "friends" are God's servants—ministers in Christ's church. An early Christian church leader counseled the people:

"Is any among you in trouble? He should pray... Is any one of

you sick? He should call the elders of the church and let them pray over him, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven... pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (James 5:13-16)

Today, the worldwide Community of Christ offers this same counsel and ministry. Yes, pray yourself. Have friends and fellow believers pray for you. But take that "next step"—call on the elders of the church, for anointing and prayers. Even if your church has no elders, this sacrament is available to you, and all people of faith, through the Community of Christ.

God is the great healer. Only God knows exactly what is wrong, how to "make it right," and when to bless you. Jesus set the healing example: "People brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them." (Luke 4:40)

His ministers continue that: "He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also."

(John 14:12) "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:18) Elders have a specific responsibility for this ministry.

People should not entertain wild ideas about divine healing, or neglect sanitation and reasonable methods of treating sickness. Divine healing had its place in the historic church of Christ, and must continue to be present, because God's love for you is unchangeable. Divine healing is a "sign" of the gospel for the believer; it is not to make converts.

The location of this sacrament should be quiet and free from distraction: a room at home, a hospital or nursing home room, or during a worship service.

The visiting ministers (usually two) will invite you to share any personal concerns. After brief sharing, one of them may offer a verbal prayer, preparing for the sacrament. Immediately following this prayer, one of the elders will anoint your head with a drop of oil (symbolizing God's outpouring love) in the name of Jesus Christ. After a brief prayer of anointing, both elders will place their hands

lightly upon your head. The second elder will offer what is called a "confirming prayer," presenting your needs before the Lord.

When finished, the elders probably will not stay long. It is best for the person to rest and meditate in the Spirit of God, which accompanies this sacrament. Another visit can be requested at any time, for prayers or just to talk.

Perhaps you have been battered by life, by personal choices, by Satan. Your friends and neighbors of the Community of Christ invite you to provide Jesus a new opportunity to heal you, in His own way.

Join the Bloomington congregation for a worship service focused on healing of mind, body and spirit at 10 a.m. June 6 at the American Red Cross, 1 Westport Court, Bloomington. Our elders will be available to pray with and for you; we'll share in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and gather in faith, expecting to encounter God's Spirit.

Brad Bryant is a missionary, serving Community of Christ congregations in the Illinois area. Contact him at brad.bryant@hp.com.

FROM THE PULPIT

God heals those in need

Alcoholics often can be treated successfully



successfully for those who are willing to seek that help.

I discussed the issue of alcoholism with a panel of knowledgeable people on the Focus on the Family radio broadcast. Included were Dr. Keith Simpson, a physician who has treat-

holism treatable, but the medical community does better with this disorder than any other chronic disease. Alcoholics emerge from treatment programs more functionally integrated, more capable and more effective than before they

ILLUSTRATION BY [unreadable]