

Fire in the House

January 26, 2003

It's not everyday that one of your church members gets burned out of their homes but that's exactly what happened to one of our sound crew last week. A faulty electric blanket caused a fire that quickly enveloped his home and he and his family were forced to flee from a fiery inferno. Unfortunately, by the time the flames were put out, they had lost all their possessions. However, only "Nick's" father needed to be hospitalized and he was released two days later. The story was, quite expectedly, on the front page of our local newspaper along with a picture of their burned out home. The response of the community, as well as our church, has been overwhelmingly positive and the family has been successfully relocated.

In my last church, another church member had lost everything she owned in a fire and I'll never forget her words, "Pastor Kevin, it really gives you an entire new perspective on what is truly valuable and important." Well, I've thought about that a lot lately and I asked myself this question: "If my home was on fire, and I knew everybody (including our cat) was safe, if I knew I had a minute or so to remove something, what would I choose?" I know what I wouldn't choose! It certainly wouldn't be anything material (money, jewels, clothes)... all of that can be eventually replaced. On the other hand, my prayer journal, photographs, letters, etc. - these are the things that can't be replaced - so, that would be my answer.

In the Bible, fire is often a metaphor for the process of refining - the apostle Paul makes an extended use of this metaphor in his first letter to the believers in Corinth. He writes in chapter three that fire will "test the quality of each man's work." Just as what we might choose to save from a burning building is important to us, our character is so important to God that He will occasionally allow fiery circumstances to refine our faith and make it stronger. And why does He do that? Because He loves us and desires to save us as much as we love and cherish those objects we want to save.

Is there a fire in your house?