

“Rightly Placed Passions”

Some years ago a tragedy occurred in the gym of a church in Kentucky. In the middle of a basketball game heated words were exchanged and one man hit another in the head, knocking him unconscious. He died shortly thereafter from the blow. Such unnecessary misery! And for what? A game. Or rather because of a passionate over-investment in an activity that should never be taken so seriously. The church league basketball game should not be treated as a matter of life and death. But because of misplaced passions the purpose of the game –mere entertainment and exercise- got lost in a horrifying way.

The whole thing was particularly sad for a couple of reasons. First, it happened in a church facility. It is not supposed to be an arena for hostility and violence. Second, both the victim and the man who caused the injury were actually on the same team. We expect team members to cooperate and help one another achieve an agreed on goal. Team members do not seek one another's harm. Something went profoundly awry during the game. Misplaced passion causes serious harm all over the world. Sadly, even in church, among people on the same "team," misplaced passions lead to unfortunate results. Physical blows are rare. But wounding words are too common. Excessive emotional investment in matters of secondary importance sometimes lures Christians from the central purpose of the church, which is to love God and show love for neighbors in the way of the gospel.

The church is made up of diverse people who, with differing talents and temperaments, have been called to "be completely humble, gentle and patient, bearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). We have been blessed by God so we can be instruments of healing, hope and joy. When our passions are in the right place, God is glorified, we build up one another and the world is served. That is what we have been called to be about at Royal Palm Christian Church.