

Jeff Balsom

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Elder, Chicago Church of Christ, Chicago, IL

After being baptized in Columbus, Ohio in 1979, I experienced the tremendous feeling of knowing that I belonged to the family of God for the very first time. I had a relationship with my heavenly Father, but I had many "fathers in the faith" as well.

Throughout my life as a disciple the past 29 years, I have seen many examples of great men of God who have helped me understand the elder role. And for that I am eternally grateful!

In 1980, I married my wife Roberta, whom I was able to date in the Kingdom of God. After the birth of our two children, we moved to the Chicago area in 1988 where I continued to work in the corporate world. We located in the western suburbs of Chicago, and we have resided there ever since. In 1992, I joined the ministry staff as the Administrator of the Chicago Church of Christ. It was during this time that John Mannel and Ron Brumley helped form my vision and desire to serve as an elder in God's church. After serving in the ministry in many different roles, I was appointed Elder in 2003. I am currently one of five elders here in Chicago and one of two full-time elders serving in the ministry along with our wives.

Roberta and I are blessed to have three wonderful children: Paul, 24, Susan, 21, and Alex, 14. Paul and his wife Sara have recently moved to Chicago after graduating from Middle Tennessee State University where they were both involved with the Greater Nashville Church. It is so good to have them living so close to us! Our daughter Susan is currently a senior at the University of Texas, where she is a part of the campus ministry in the Austin Church of Christ. She will be graduating in May and has accepted an invitation to work for HOPE Worldwide. She will be serving in Louisiana and helping with efforts to rebuild the communities impacted by Hurricane Katrina. In 1999, we adopted our third child, Alex, from Russia. He is now in the eighth grade and is an undefeated wrestler!

As the years pass, all of us go through many joys and trials in our lives. As time marches on, it is clear that God moves through all of these experiences. He teaches us, transforms us and is working through the sanctification process to make us into what He envisions us becoming for His purposes. These experiences can either make us or break us. As Abraham was faithful when he was called by God and continued to be faithful many times and in many ways, we too must face our own calling with great faithfulness and joy as He makes us into what He desires. Roberta and I have been through health challenges, deaths in the family, financial difficulties and the daily struggles of life. We have learned, over and over again, to face these times with faithfulness and to hold on to the eternal life to which we were called. Our simple life lesson would be for all of us to take hold of God forever, never giving up the fight to stay faithful to Him until our journey is completed. It will be well worth the effort!

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1Timothy 6:12