

What Kind of Runner Would You Be?

So then let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. (Hebrews 12:1-2a, CEB)

How would you prefer to run? Do you like a longer course or a shorter course? My son, Joshua, for example, has shown a preference for longer races. This spring, he ran a half marathon and during track season, he ran the longest races. I have no doubt that someday he will run a full marathon. Most other kids his age seem to prefer running a shorter race, even if it means having to go at a faster pace.

In his book, *12 Keys to an Effective Church*, Kennon Callahan shared a very helpful analogy about the way people grow in their faith. He said that some people are like **marathon runners**, while others are like **sprinters** when it comes to how they choose to practice their faith.

Marathon runners are people who are comfortable with attending an ongoing Sunday School or home-based class which meets for a longer period of time, such as the Disciple Bible Study class I led last year (24 weeks long) or a Sunday School class that's met together for many years. Marathoners would also be more likely to serve for a long period of time (3 year terms) on an administrative committee.

On the other hand, many people are more like **sprinters** in the way they approach their faith. They enjoy participating in a shorter Bible study, perhaps 6-weeks in length that they can focus on for a season, such as Advent or Lent. When time allows, they will find another sprinter class to join, but it may not be the same one as before. They also work best by serving by making a series of short-term commitments, let's say to helping during a week of Vacation Bible School, or some other project that has a clear start and end date.

With that in mind, I'm excited to let you know that our adult Sunday School classes have a well-balanced mix of opportunities for both **marathoners and sprinters**. Please look for a full listing of our Fall classes in the next newsletter, which will be sent out in the next day or so. In that listing, you will find some ongoing classes which have been meeting together for a while and generally will meet all throughout the year. You will also find several new options which are set up in six week sessions. If you have a sprinter approach, these classes may be for you!

No matter what your needs and preferences are, the goal is still the same for everyone in our community of faith. We hope that every person who is part of Trinity UMC will choose to participate in classes in order to grow in relationships with others and in faith in Christ. Please also be reminded of our new schedule, which begins Sunday, August 26. With worship services at 7:45 am (Chapel), 9:00 am (Sanctuary) and 11:15 am (Fellowship Hall), we will now have a full hour of Sunday school time, from 10:10-11:10.

I'm looking forward to a great year of growing and learning as we run the race that is laid out before us!

In Christ,

Pastor David Rittgers