

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Nursing Care Community

August 2009

Dear Prayer,

Hi there! My sister commented recently that the two weeks between her paychecks used to seem like the longest two weeks in the world, but now that she works in the payroll department (and is responsible for issuing two-week paychecks) that same two-week period now seems to last only a very short time. I thought this was an excellent illustration of perspective and how the residents whom I serve might consider the *time* between our weekly worship services. Sometimes it can feel to me like the time between services is almost non-existent but to the residents it may seem like a *very long* week. The same may be true with you. It may seem that you are always getting this prayer letter but that is only because you are with me on the service side of this equation. Thank you for being with me...

This past month a friend and I were able to visit one of the homes for an activity night. We took in snacks, sodas, and prizes for the games. It was a great blessing not only to them but to my friend and me as well, as we were able to experience grace through the enjoyment of the residents during this activity. After the activity and as we were closing the evening's events, we were able to share a moment to partake in the Lord's Supper – the Communion of the saints. All who were Christian were invited to partake, but one gentleman would not, claiming that he was "unworthy." I explained to him that we were all unworthy and the blood of Jesus was shed for us "yet while I was still a sinner" (Rom. 5:8). After a little sermonizing by me, he decided that in faith he could partake with us. It was a great night with a finish of eternal value. Thank you for praying for and supporting this work as it is so very important to the people whom we serve.

Now for the part of this work that I really do not like: business. June marked the six-month financial review of the ministry, and this is the conclusion.

1. The ministry income is only ½ of what is needed to meet the annual budget.
2. The monthly ministry expenses are 20% more than the CURRENT monthly income.

These two facts indicate that a few things need to be addressed:

1. The annual budget is too aggressive by 50%.
2. The monthly expenses need to decrease.
3. The monthly income needs to increase.

Knowing that the annual budget was only a guide (and not a law) helps with the aggressive budget concern – I simply ignore it. ☺

There is really only one budget category that I can decrease to make a difference in the expenditures – *my monthly salary*. So beginning in July, I will reduce my income by \$350.00 per month (which also reduces the amount of employment taxes that the ministry pays out as well). A friend of the ministry has already balked at this option, but my response is that this is Michigan and things are tough all over – everyone is making sacrifices in order to make ends meet.

To fully address the financial concerns, I must also increase the ministry's monthly income, and this is where I need to ask you to prayerfully consider helping me do this. Please approach your church's Mission Board about supporting the Sharing Org with a monthly contribution. Tell your friends and family about the Sharing Org and ask if they would appreciate the opportunity to serve the local residents of nursing and adult foster care homes with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many people and organizations would appreciate learning about this *unique* opportunity to serve the people with the Gospel of Jesus. I am asking you to do these things because only you have the keys into your communities of influence. Whatever you decide to do, I ask that you would lift up the Sharing Org in your prayers as we need God to work through His people to address these concerns.

A special note of prayer, I ask that you would be in prayer for my health. I am rarely one to request prayer for my own personal health issues (just too many) but this is one that I feel I need to make known. Please pray for my sight as I have gone blind in my right eye in that past couple of weeks. I am suffering from Optic Neuritis and it is expected to relent but because of the MS I never really go back to "normal". Please pray for recovery and healing for my vision.

Together with you in His service,
John

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It is the MISSION of the Sharing Org to share the love of God and to build relationships with residents of care facilities by providing them with weekly interdenominational Christian worship services.

Ministry Moment

I met someone new. He was an 18-year-old kid who was previously in a foster home but with the 18th birthday comes the transition to the Adult Foster Care home. When this young man joined our service, I noticed that he did not fit – *Everyone there was older (much, much older)*.

Polite, considerate, and helpful are the words that first come to my mind that best describe him. My heart ached for him as I realized that mental illness does not afflict only the aged. Of course I knew this, but now here was hard evidence of the fact. This good-looking young man was mentally ill and has been in the system all of his life.

In our worship I was able to share the message of grace with him. I do not know what his religious background has been like, but for this time in his life, he is hearing that God loves him as proven by Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Despite his illness, despite his lack of a family who can care for him, despite the life situation that he is presently in, he is hearing that One who was dead for three days has been raised to life and because of that, we each have hope – not just for when we die but also in our present lives.

This kid is someone's child and someone's grandchild. As I think about that, I am so glad that I have the privilege of offering this child the grace of Christ and the message of redemption. Who has told this kid lately that God loves him? I have...

I really do have a great job.

Blessings,
~ John