

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

April 1, 2011

Dear Prayer Partner,

MINISTRY MOMENT

When he said it, I was on top of the world, but then I was released and I deflated like a dollar store balloon.

After the services at one of my homes I was shaking hands with the residents and a gentleman held fast to my hand, looked me in the eye, and told me how much he appreciated my service to him and the rest of the residents.

“Well of course I can’t get out to another church so I am so very thankful that you come here each week.”

Once again I was reminded why God called me to this ministry in the first place and (*for the moment*) the exact reason that I am not overly concerned when I realize how woefully underfunded we are. The fact was that he said it, that he voiced the exact reason that we have remained faithful in this ministry, the exact reason that made me prioritize *weekly* services, the exact reason that this ministry is important: residents in the care facilities have no other real options to enjoy the love of Christ in the church. Later that evening a friend asked me if there was anything new in the ministry and, of course, this was what I shared.

Then a couple days later, at another home, I was talking with the men, and I asked them how they were doing – *how their faith was*. The report? They were (a) doing fine and (b) never really thought much about their faith throughout the week... Pblpblpblbbpblpblbbphphph (*The sound of that deflating dollar store balloon*)... My head lost pressure, and I was immediately a hat size smaller than usual. They “*did not think about their faith during the week*”!?!? Inquiring a little, I asked them if I am wasting my and their time coming each week to which they replied “not at all.” They enjoyed my company and looked forward to our worship service each week. Am I not pounding the Jesus drum hard enough when I am with them?

Here is a group of guys who genuinely believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they know that they are sinners and that Jesus died upon the cross for them and the sins of the world, but apparently the claim of salvation has not taken hold deep enough that they think about it during their week outside of “church”. Immediately the sound of personal accusations from the devil (*and my own self-doubt*) began to emerge. What was I doing wrong? Have I been wasting my and God’s time, and everyone’s money, by pursuing this ministry for the past 7 years of my life? Have I allowed my family to wallow in poverty for nothing? Did I miss God’s leading in my life all this time? Yeah, yeah, I was headed to my own little pity party - and what a grande-gala it was promising to be too!

So, I was forced to once again seek counsel with God. I would be a liar if I told you that I did this all the time but I, to my chagrin, get busy with life and allow my times with God to degrade into meaningless little moments of high-fives and blessings-of-the-meal. However, God is faithful and he reminded me once again that I am these people’s pastor, and their faith will never become active and alive unless I help them to see it as an active living experience of a day-in-and-day-out journey.

As I contemplated this, something happened. No, my head did not swell up. The self-doubt and accusations of the evil one were silenced as I was once again encouraged and impassioned about the work of Christ in the lives of the people through me. Who knows who will accept and receive what from the hand of God, but for my part I shall remain faithful to the work at hand and keep steady my plow.

The moral of the story? No matter what our life circumstances are, we all need to be deliberate about keeping counsel with God.

~John

PRAYER

Hi there. As one more way that I can serve the whole of humanity, I want to remind you that April 18th is the dead-line to have your taxes post-marked. You may consider this courtesy a public service announcement for the betterment of your life. (*self-consciously clears throat*)

Well, the date and time are set: On April 9th Chesterfield's VOX Church will be sending a service team to one of the facilities that The Sharing Org serves to do basic spring cleaning of the grounds followed by a time of fellowship with the residents. We will be singing some worship songs together and the residents have been invited to sing special songs or play their instruments if they desire – some of them do, and it should be great fun! Please pray that the residents are blessed by this time and that they recognize the love of Christ in the servants who come.

Please pray for my family. I don't have anything specific to ask you to pray about, I just have a basic desire to see God rejuvenate our lives of faith. I guess the rejuvenation part is for Megan and I, while the kids will experience the trickle-down effect. I am concerned with the routines and the ruts that we've gotten used to that blind us to the work of the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives. No, I'm not going through a midlife crisis or anything (*although I wouldn't mind a new sports car*). I am just mindful that my personal routines can blind me to the wonders of God and hinder my ability to share any excitement about them with others. Please keep us in mind as you keep counsel with God.

The other day I read that one of man's basic desires is to make an impact in this world in one way or another. Well, as one of our partners in this ministry (*and I do consider our prayer partners to have a stake in this work*) I am happy to report that every week YOU are impacting the world of many people in the care facilities. Slight as it might be in our own eyes, the emotional lives of the people I meet with every week are being significantly improved. Thank you for your financial and prayer support.

Talk soon.

Blessings,
John

