

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

August 2011

Ministry Moment:

What a crazy July...

During the 4th of July weekend I was called by a local funeral director to see if I was available to serve a family on Wednesday the 6th. I was, so I arranged my schedule to meet with the family in order to be prepared for the funeral. Before I left the house (*on Tuesday*) to visit with the family, I was called to one of the nursing homes because one of the regulars to our worship services was passing. So I stopped in there to pray with the passing man and spent time with his family. Afterward I went onto meet with the other family at the funeral home.

The next morning (*Wednesday*) when I arrived to perform the funeral, I was asked if I could officiate on *Thursday* the funeral of another person who had just passed. So after the funeral on *Wednesday*, I went to meet with the family of the next person for the funeral on *Thursday* but was delayed as the family was not available. So, in the meantime, I called to cancel the two homes that I was supposed to perform services at but would be unable due to the *Thursday* funeral. When I talked with the first home I was informed that one of the residents had passed over the 4th and the funeral had just been completed. Shocked, I promised to swing by when I could in order to pray with one of the residents who was particularly close to the resident who had just passed.

On *Thursday* morning I performed the 2nd funeral. This was an interesting funeral because most times when I am called by a funeral home to officiate a service, the people do not actually know me but are looking for a pastor to do a *Christian* funeral because, well, because America is a “Christian” nation. Anyway, one of the family members of the deceased told me in no uncertain terms that I was to get a very clear gospel message across to the people. While I think that I usually do this, it was nice to have it directly requested.

The next day (*Friday*) I was called to come to the hospital as one of the ladies who has known me since I was in diapers and who I had served for a few years in one of the homes was being taken off life-support and the family wanted me to come. So I hurried off to the hospital and got there a few minutes too late but was able to pray with the family. They asked me to officiate the funeral on that following *Monday*. I agreed. After I left the hospital, I went to pay my respects at the home of the resident who had passed away over the July 4th weekend.

Saturday I had a day of relative rest – I worked in the office all day since I’d been out-of-the-office so much the previous week. *Sunday* I served in the nursery at church (*very draining*), then hosted a family from church for lunch (*not draining but not restful either*), and then I was off to the funeral home to spend time with the family that I was serving for this 3rd funeral on *Monday*. When I arrived home at 8

p.m. or so, I began writing the service for the following morning's funeral. The 3rd funeral was at 11:30 a.m. on *Monday*, so I was still able to make my two Monday-morning worship services with residents prior to the funeral. Then I arrived at the church for the funeral around 11 a.m. where I began the process of laying our friend to rest.

Monday's funeral seemed to go like all the rest. I have a standard formula that I stick with when writing a funeral service, so it was not out of the ordinary. It was nice being with a family that knew me and knew my family for generations, and it was nice being in a church building for the service – I am usually conducting services at the funeral home. One of the changes in my duties for this funeral was that I was expected to be in attendance at the luncheon after the service. It was this luncheon that really showed me the worth of what I do at a funeral.

An older gentleman (*older than me*) made eye contact with me from across the room. He held my gaze as he walked across to where I was seated. When he came to me he shook my hand and said, "*Thank you. I have avoided church for many years because I can never understand what the preachers are saying, but I fully understood what you said today.*" I thanked him for telling me that, and then he thanked me again and went back to his seat. I doubt that I will ever see that gentleman again in this life, but I am confident that the Holy Spirit of God used me that day to communicate the greatest message ever told – *the Good News of Jesus Christ*.

Have I expressed lately how much I love my work?

~John

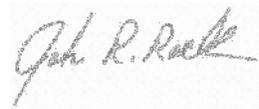
Prayer Letter:

Dear Prayer Partner,

This prayer letter is short because I am going out of town at the end of the month for my brother-in-law's wedding. Our family is taking a 6-day trip to Iowa for the nuptials. So I have only one prayer request – *for travelling mercies*.

Our family has never spent so much time together in the auto or in a hotel room before – in fact, I don't think my kids have ever been in a hotel before. So please pray that the vehicle runs well, the children travel well, the parents get restful sleep at night, and that this is a time that we all will remember fondly.

Until next month - blessings,



John