

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

APRIL 2016

Ministry Moment...

I walked into the home and there was strife among the residents. They were verbally attacking each other, accusing each other, and forming factions. Everyone was claiming that the other was not being very “Christian” but that God was on *their* side of the argument. A dozen angry voices yelling at each other without the shield of Facebook to protect their identities; it was kind of Jerry Springer-ish. Like children who fight on the playground, if there had been stones I’m sure they would have been throwing them at each other.

I gained control of the tiny assembly and opened our time together with a word of prayer asking the Holy Spirit to quiet our souls.

Since it was Holy Week, I was focused on the Cross. I recall pointing out the cross of our own faith in the relationships we have with each other. I talked about Jesus having *paid it all* on His Cross, and since we had just sung the hymn “Just As I Am,” how the Cross of our Lord allows each of us to come to Him just as we are: regardless of our sins.

To be honest, I am not exactly sure what all I said, but at the end of our time they did depart without yelling at each other. I’m sure they were just waiting for me to leave the building before they started up again, but at least, for a moment, there was peace in the frustrations of their world.

As I spend more and more time with the residents, I have discovered that I am not so very different. At times I still get my turnip cart tipped, my feathers ruffled, and sometimes I even get my knickers twisted into a knot. (Just see me when I am trying to get my kids out the door on time for church.) When I do, the words of the minister may not mean much to me, at the moment, but through the week the Spirit of God is faithful to calm my soul and remind me of His love for me--*and my brother*.

I have begun spending time coloring with a resident. We both have one of those adult coloring books where each picture is overwhelmingly detailed. He commented on the fact that some pictures are so detailed he often doesn’t even want to start, but he does. And after consistent effort and time he realizes his picture is finished -- *and it is beautiful*.

I thought about this for some time and realized that his words describe my own feelings of the vision God has placed on my heart for this ministry. I see a picture of all churches in Michigan tending to the spiritual needs of the many Adult Foster Care homes in their own neighborhoods, and I am tempted to not even try. The vision seems so very detailed. But I know that as we consistently endure over time, our picture will be realized and it will be beautiful.

~John

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6&7)

Prayer Letter...

Dear Prayer Partner,

This morning (3/26/2016) I read Psalm 12. Verse five stood out to me.

“For the oppression of the poor, the sighing of the needy, I will arise,” says the Lord; “I will set him in the safety for which he yearns.”
(Psalm 12:5)

What strikes me afresh is the obviousness of this ministry. *We* are the ‘rising’ of God and *we* are His hands for the oppressed and needy that we serve. *Through us*, God rises to deliver the safety -- *the love and Gospel of Jesus Christ* -- to the oppressed and needy.

Granted, the people we serve are not needy in the sense that they are without food and shelter, but they are oppressed in spirit and health. Our ministry exists to tend to the spiritual welfare of those who are secluded from the Christian community as a whole. The people we serve do not generally have the option of worshipping with their local church congregation, nor do they have the option of going to home-based Bible study groups with the rest of the local church. Therefore we strive to be the rising of God for the residents and to bring them the safety and comfort for which they yearn.

I want to encourage you, as a Prayer Partner, to consider your role in this ministry. To figure out when and how you will specifically pray for **5 minutes** each day for our work (God’s rising). I want to ask you to do this, even though I know finding 5 minutes in a busy schedule is difficult. But do it, and seek the Lord on behalf of the ones He has heard. Your prayer is important because the people we serve (the oppressed and the needy) are yearning for the peace which passes all understanding. Our Savior desires that their souls should be met with His love and gospel. Together, we serve Jesus: in the shadow of His Cross and the light of His Resurrection, we are the rising of His Light for the people in the nursing care community. Please do join us in daily prayer.

Together, I am confident that the Love and Grace of our Lord will be realized in the lives of those we pray for and serve.

With the great appreciation for serving Him with you,



John

P.S. Please help by promoting the Greeting Card fund raiser. If you like, you can put on your old Girl Scout uniform and go door-to-door selling sets or simply sit outside the grocery store exit door and get people to buy some that way. Better would be to have your church promote the effort in its weekly announcements, but hey, I’m happy with whatever works. I have included a prayer list to help you in praying for 5 minutes a day. Also, as you pray, please don’t hesitate to just be quiet before God and listen for His voice. Please contact me with anything you feel that God has put on your heart for this work, for I believe that in this way the true prophetic gift of the Holy Spirit will be recognized among us.

²⁰ He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”
(Matthew 17:21)