

## ***A Spiritual Journey***

I was in my early forties when I felt compelled to give back to the Lord. I had always been active in church – teaching Sunday school, going to Bible studies, leading children’s church, etc. But I did not feel like I was giving from my heart. I always knew there would be a special ministry for me some day if I was patient, so I waited.

The opportunity came when Sherry Ketner, a behavioral health nurse and dear friend of mine, shared with me her vision of using visitation to meet the spiritual needs of Christians who had lost touch with church families due to illness, age, or disability. The vision was hers, but the mission became mine. We put together visitation elements on a small scale that at the time I used in the leadership module of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program I was enrolled in. We told each other that we would carry out the plans of the visitation program community wide, that is, if God willed it.

We went our separate ways and I became busy with my life. I was still active in my church, had graduated from the BSN program, and was working in a nursing home. After two years, Sherry called me and asked me if I was still willing to make her vision a reality. God knew when the time was right, and I felt like a soldier who had been called to attention ready to receive orders.

## ***A Passionate Journey***

At our first meeting, Sherry shared with me again as she had before about the burden that God placed on her heart to minister to Christians who were isolated from Christian fellowship. She also had (and still has) a burden for unsaved individuals. We already had the template to transform her vision from intangible concepts into meaningful person to person interactions. We prayed together only asking that God’s will be done.

The first item on our agenda was to notify churches in the community about who we were and what we were planning to do. The phone book was our resource center and we sent out as many introduction letters as was possible. Then we scheduled the initial meeting and waited to see who or if anyone would show up.



From various churches, we had a wonderful group of individuals who in the first year were so valuable in getting foundational tasks completed and refining Sherry’s vision as it became a reality that changed our lives. Each and every individual who has served in the ministry has been precious. Some have shared their God-given talents in the ministry for a short time blessing many through their efforts. Some have given of themselves for a longer time and I have come to love them dearly.

After many prayers and much effort, the systems were ready to accept referrals. We notified nursing homes, home health agencies, doctor’s offices, churches, and community members that we could help individuals by utilizing church and community resources.

The services of La Plata Visiting Ministry were needed as evidenced by the referrals that we received. We worried about overwhelming our systems. But God was gracious to us by putting individuals in our path who we could minister to – no more and no less.

My Christian journey has been personal and at times difficult as I tried to “fit in” over the years. The

difficulties were necessary in order to produce spiritual growth, but now, instead of fitting in, I have found “it” – the special ministry where I serve the Lord passionately and meaningfully filling my soul.

## ***Care for the Caregiver***

Taking care of yourself can be difficult when you are pulled in many directions – work demands and home responsibilities while caring for an aged parent. Part of caring for yourself is realizing that the object of your care as a caregiver is a living breathing person.

Take time to stop – and think less about the tasks to be done and focus on the person who you are caring for. Think for a moment and meditate about the love of God and how merciful and gracious He is. Many times there are emotions and family dynamics that can add to guilt, anger, and depression.

Take part in a support group where burdens can be shared and you learn that you are not alone. Not only do you find emotional support, but also answers and resources.



***Ye know the house of Stephanas...and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.***

***I Corinthians 16:15 KJV***