

1CALL, COMMITMENT, SERVICE Rev. J. Keene October 26,2008
SOMETIMES, INSTEAD OF DOING A REGULAR SUNDAY TALK, I ASK PEOPLE TO WRITE QUESTIONS OR ISSUES THEY WOULD LIKE ME TO DISCUSS ON A 3 X 5 CARD. THE USHERS COLLECT THEM AND I PROCEED TO SORT THROUGH THE CARDS AND TALK EXTEMPORANEOUSLY. . .THIS HAPPENED AWHILE BACK BECAUSE I HAD JUST RETURNED LATE THE NIGHT BEFORE FROM MY EX-HUSBANDS FUNERAL IN MICHIGAN. I SIMPLY COULD NOT GET A TALK TOGETHER, ALTHOUGH THE TITLE I HAD CHOSEN WAS: "DON'T POSTPONE YOUR LIFE." WE'LL EXPLORE THAT MORE A BIT LATER. ONE CARD ASKED THE QUESTIONS: "WHAT IS YOUR COMMITMENT TO GARDEN PARK UNITY? AND WHAT IS YOUR COMMITMENT TO US AS INDIVIDUALS? I DECIDED TO TAKE THIS ONE HOME AND THINK ABOUT IT FOR AWHILE - SO TODAY'S TALK IS MY ANSWER TO THOSE QUESTIONS. .

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BOTTOM LINE FOR ME: WHAT IS MY COMMITMENT TO LIFE? IN MY EARLIER YEARS I WANTED A PICTURE BOOK LIFE: A LOVING HUSBAND AND HEALTHY FAMILY, A NICE HOME, A COTTAGE ON A LAKE AND A BOAT SO I COULD WATER SKI; FRIENDS TO HAVE FUN WITH; SMOOTH SAILING IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
SO, THAT DID NOT HAPPEN AND I NEEDED TO FIND A WAY TO SURVIVE DISAPPOINTMENTS AND SO CALLED TRAGEDIES. . I BECAME MORE INTERESTED IN PEACE OF MIND AND FINDING A HIGHER PURPOSE THAN FOCUSING UPON THE OUTER SATISFACTIONS OF LIFE. I FEEL THAT BY THE GRACE OF GOD A NEW DIRECTION AND NEW WAYS OF BEING APPEARED IN FRONT OF ME.
I GOT SO MUCH SATISFACTION FROM MEDITATION, LEARNING SPIRITUAL TRUTHS AND WORKING TO APPLY THEM, SO MUCH SATISFACTION FROM TURNING MY LIFE AROUND AND WATCHING WHAT A SPIRITUAL LIFE COULD DO FOR ALL OF US THAT A BURNING DESIRE TO SHARE THAT TRUTH GREW IN MY HEART. THAT WAS THE CALL. SO I LEFT MY TENURED TEACHING POSITION AND WENT OFF TO UNITY MINISTERIAL SCHOOL. I LEFT BEHIND A SURE AND SECURE POSITION WITH THE PROMISE OF A SURE AND SECURE RETIREMENT AND LIKE THE FOOL IN THE TAROT DECK, STEPPED OUT IN FAITH. IT'S BEEN SAID WHEN YOU JUMP OFF A PRECIPICE, YOU EITHER FLY OR GOD PICKS UP THE PIECES. . .

MY TAKE ON WHAT HAPPENED IS THAT I LEARNED TO FLY - I LOVE THE DECISION I MADE, BUT I HAVE LEARNED THAT LEARNING AND CHALLENGES DON'T STOP JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE A MINISTER.

SO WHAT IS MY COMMITMENT?

BASICALLY IT IS TO LOVE GOD, TO LOVE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND TO SHARE WHATEVER SPIRIT WOULD HAVE ME SHARE; TO GO WHERE SPIRIT WOULD HAVE ME GO; DO WHAT SPIRIT WOULD HAVE ME DO. I BELIEVE THAT IS A PATH TO MY ENLIGHTENMENT AND THAT ENLIGHTENMENT IS THE ONLY AUTHENTIC PATH - CAROLYN MYSS SAYS IN THE INTERIOR CASTLE THAT "EVERYTHING ELSE IS A DETOUR." SO MY FIRST PRIORITY IS TO STAY ON THE PATH; TO MAKE THE PEACE OF GOD MY ONE GOAL - AND FROM THAT TO LOVE AND SERVE PEOPLE AS SPIRIT DIRECTS.

(COURSE IN MIRACLES)

SO MY COMMITMENT TO GARDEN PARK IS NOT FOR A SPECIFIC LENGTH OF TIME. I AM COMMITTED TO DO THE VERY BEST I KNOW HOW WHILE I AM HERE. THAT MEANS TO ALLOW SPIRIT TO SPEAK THROUGH ME, TO TEACH THROUGH ME, TO LOVE THROUGH ME, TO MAKE SURE THAT THE DECISIONS I MAKE WILL SUPPORT THE WELL BEING OF THE CHURCH AND ARE PRAYERFULLY AND CAREFULLY MADE. MY COMMITMENT TO EACH OF YOU IS TO BEHOLD THE CHRIST IN YOU; TO PRAY AND COUNSEL WITH YOU; TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT YOU ON YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY.

IN RETURN, I WANT TO ASK FOR YOUR APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT. BEING A MINISTER IS UNLIKE MOST OTHER PROFESSIONS IN THAT UNLESS WE ARE OUT OF TOWN, WE ARE ON CALL 24/7. WHEN SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE OR OUR PRESENCE IS NECESSARY, WE'RE THERE NO MATTER IF IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A DAY OFF OR NOT. I'M NOT ABLE TO "PULL THE PLUG" ON CHURCH ISSUES OR CONFIDENTIAL CHALLENGES THAT PEOPLE SHARE WITH ME. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I AM NOT COMPLAINING. I LOVE WHAT I DO AND WOULD HAVE IT NO OTHER WAY.

QUOTE FROM CAROLYN MYSS: BEING OF MYSTICAL SERVICE TO THE WORLD IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN ORGANIZE INTO HOURS AND DAYS LIKE AN ORDINARY FORTY HOUR A WEEK JOB. IT'S A PASSION. YOU BECOME YOUR CALLING. - PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IS ONGOING AND REQUIRES THE INNER WORK OF SELF-EXAMINATION, CONTEMPLATION, AND PRAYER. YOU MUST

LEARN TO LOVE THE DISCIPLINE OF THE INNER LIFE AND ALL IT REQUIRES OF YOU.”

I TAKE MY CALLING, COMMITMENT AND SERVICE MOST SERIOUSLY. I HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT I AM STILL VERY HUMAN AND HAVE NEEDS TO LET GO, RELAX & GET AWAY.

FROM THE BEGINNING I’VE HAD FOUR WEEKS OF VACATION AND 4 TIMES A YEAR THERE ARE 5 SUNDAYS IN A MONTH, SO I TAKE OFF THOSE EXTRA SUNDAYS. FOR THIS COMING YEAR, THE BOARD HAS GENEROUSLY AGREED THAT I MAY TAKE MY VACATION TIME ALL AT ONCE AND SPEND THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY IN FLORIDA. MY DEAR FRIEND REV. HELICE GREENE WHO HAS A MINISTRY IN OAK PARK, IL IS COMING ALONG. . . .REV. KATHY ENGELHARDT WILL BE COVERING FOR ME WHILE I’M GONE. AGAIN, I ASK FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR THAT PLAN AND FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR KATHY. . . .

REST AND RENEWAL ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ME IF I AM TO KEEP THE CHANNEL OF LOVE AND GRACE OPEN THAT I MAY LOVE AND SERVE YOU .

CAROLYN ASKS IN THE INTERIOR CASTLE: “WHAT ARE THE SOUL GIFTS, THE GIFTS OF SERVICE THAT YOU YET HAVE TO DISCOVER?” MY COMMITMENT IS TO KEEP ON EXPANDING MY HORIZONS - TO KEEP LEARNING AND GROWING IN SPIRIT - TO STAY FRESH AND ALIVE IN SPIRIT - TO NOT SLEEPWALK THRU LIFE - TO NOT POSTPONE MY LIFE. IF I CANNOT DO WHAT I DO WITH JOY AND PASSION, I NEED TO CHANGE COURSE. . . .I WANT TO KEEP THE JOY AND PASSION IN MY MINISTRY HERE AND I ASK THAT WE ALL WORK ON KEEPING GARDEN PARK A PLACE OF LOVE, A PLACE OF PASSION FOR SERVICE AND A PLACE FOR EXPANDING OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. CLOSING POEM, READING, STORY. . . .