

# Reeves: Never retire from serving God

January 25, 2017

At First Baptist Church in Corsicana, we recently celebrated the retirement of a saint among us. Her name is Joanna Lewis. Joanna served as our financial secretary 41 years, and her husband, Truett, has taught Sunday school at First Baptist even longer than that. Joanna received a tribute and celebration filled with gifts, happy tears, laughter and love. It certainly was a party befitting someone of her tenure.



Danny Reeves Of course, Joanna didn't want any of that attention, and if she knew I were writing about her now, she would faint of embarrassment. But as a pastor, I know a life like Joanna's is the kind of life all of us should consider. We should consider it personally and deeply.

You see, Joanna is quiet, steady and faithful. No, let me correct that. She is *faithful*! (I don't know if I can emphasize it enough.) Friends, she is the personification of steadfastness and faithfulness. She has been serving the Lord for decades, and pastors like me should thank God above, because we stand on the shoulders of people like her. Yes, now she is old, but every single day, even in her elder years, she continues to exhibit gentleness, meekness, courage, dependability and commitment. She shows all of us in

younger generations what following God truly looks like. She may be stepping down from her small paid position, but I assure you, she is far from finished in the big task of serving the Lord through our church.

The great news is there are people like Joanna all across our great state in Texas Baptist churches. And when I think of all those beautiful saints, I find myself thinking of Caleb from the Old Testament. Caleb is a great character! At 85 years old, he refused to quit. He was at an age when most people are feeling it's time to slow down and step aside, but Caleb was going to get his piece of the Promised Land.

There is immediate application for us:

**When you follow God wholeheartedly, you'll never retire from serving him.**

I know the concept of retirement is something we dream of in our culture, and retirement from a career is a fine idea. Hey, it's a great time to go out and spend your children's inheritance! But did you realize retirement is not a concept that remotely touches following the Lord? The reason is because serving the Lord is not a job; it's a life-calling. That's what the Latin word "vocation" means—a calling. Our true vocation is to follow God, so...

**"You can't take a vacation from your vocation!"**

You see, God isn't through with you, whatever your age. You have to remember the Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint. So, keep on serving, keep on praying and keep on being available to God.

I am thankful today to write about Caleb, but I am even more thankful to write about Joanna Lewis. I praise God for many others just like her across our state—steady, faithful, quiet, committed disciples who make all of us better and strengthen our churches.

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