

Richard Ray: Find your Paul or Silas in ministry

November 2, 2014

I had the blessing to visit with several bivocational and smaller-church ministers this past week. With each visit came the realization pastoring in a small church is both joyful and challenging.

I have pastored more than 18 years in the small-church mission field, and even though there are real challenges and struggles that take place in the ministry and your week never goes as planned, and people don't react like you think they should, you can still find a reason to pray and sing.



Richard Ray I am reminded of the Apostle Paul in Acts 16, where he and Silas were beaten and shackled and thrown into prison all because they lived out their faith in Christ. I have known many small-church pastors who often feel they have been beaten and shackled and thrown into prison all because they were living out their faith in Christ, only to be dismissed and left alone by the church and their fellow servant leaders. It becomes a time of darkness and despair, where they debate whether you to remain in the ministry or run for the hills. Before you start looking for that hill to run too, let us look at what Paul and Silas did in their time of despair and loneliness.

Acts 16:25 says, "But at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing

hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Paul and Silas had been beaten with rods, shackled and thrown into a dark prison cave, and yet we find them praying and singing. When I think of all the times I have been hurt in ministry, I think of Paul and Silas and how they took a physical and spiritual beating, and instead of giving into the pain and suffering, they prayed harder and sang louder, to the point that the prisoners were listening to them.

The reason Paul and Silas could pray and sing is they had each other. We in the ministry need a Paul or a Silas who is willing to walk with us, struggle with us and even suffer with us, so that when we feel beaten and shackled by life and ministry, we can still find cause to pray and sing.

No minister should ever go it alone in the ministry. Every minister needs to find a Paul or a Silas so that God’s grace continues to be proclaimed. As Paul and Silas prayed and sang, the prisoners were listening to them. Remember, no matter what struggles you are going through, you still have the calling to proclaim God’s grace to those around you.



God has not called you to serve alone. I encourage you to find your prayer and singing partner so that when your ministry finds you in a cold, dark place and you feel beaten and shackled, you will be able to pray and sing. If you cannot find a Paul or Silas, then call on me, and let me be your prayer and singing partner as you fulfill your calling. Do not be a prisoner in the hardship of ministry, but instead be a proclaimer for the world is listening.

As a reminder, your Texas Baptist Bivocational/Small-Church Association invites all small-church ministers and their families to the annual Bivocational/Small-Church Luncheon during the Baptist General Convention of Texas Annual Meeting in Waco, 11:30 a.m., Tuesday Nov. 18, at in the Waco Convention Center, Texas Rooms 117-118.

This year's guest speaker will be Jan Daehnert. This luncheon is to honor the small-church ministers and their servant leaders. Seating is limited, so if you would like to reserve your tickets, email (brother_ray@juno.com) your name, church and how many tickets you need. You may pick up your free tickets at the Bivocational/Small-Church Association booth in the Waco Convention Center.

Until next time, please visit our website www.bivocational.com.

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