



Dear Prayer Partner,

As a monthly financial contributor to (or a board member of) the Sharing Org I consider you to be one of our partners in this ministry. By your participation you are communicating that you have a deep commitment to taking the Gospel of our Lord to the residents of care facilities and that you are committed to the mission of providing weekly worship services for those who cannot get out of their homes to attend a local church. For this reason, in addition to your monthly prayer letter, I will be including additional details about the ministry in order to give you a fuller view of how the Sharing Org touches the lives of the people that we serve. In doing so I hope that you will gain a deeper understanding of how you are a part of a powerful and meaningful ministry that loves people who are often overlooked in our society.

A woman in one the homes has a standing date with me so that I can lay hands on her and pray for her healing after each week's service. I am glad to do this, and I know that she appreciates the *one-on-one time* that she gets with me because of it. After a few weeks of this a young man has started coming to me to have me lay hands on him and pray for his healing, too. When I asked him what specifically he wanted healing for he told me his toe, his toe had a painful blister on it. I agreed to pray for him (*I find that it's easier to pray in faith for God to heal toe blisters than it is to pray for someone's teeth to grow back*), and now he too has a standing date with me after each service.

It is obvious that the young man with the sore toe comes each week for prayer because, sore toe or not, he gets to have me physically touch his shoulder, love him, and care for him. I sometimes forget that the simplest of human touches to a lonely and hurting person can be a very soothing and therapeutic thing. I remember seeing video of Mother Teresa caring for the dying and how she made it a point to touch and rub a person's exposed skin with her bare hand because she believed in the comfort that human touch can bring to people. With this in mind, I make an extra effort to squeeze the man's shoulder as a gesture that communicates that I care for him.

The woman, however, has communicated her personal struggle and frustration with God for allowing her mental illness to persist so that she has to have a court-appointed guardian and be forced to live in a group home. She wonders why the God who can do anything seems unwilling to set her free from the physical bonds

of her mind. When he asks me why God refuses to set her free physically, I can do nothing more than explain that I too share in this question and frustration. That I too have an illness that God has not yet healed me from.

Our message this last week was from Galatians 3 where Paul tells us to *consider Abraham*, that through his faith God credited to him righteousness. As I have considered Abraham I realized that he was called to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering. I realized that Abraham must not have understood why God would call for a human sacrifice, let alone a human sacrifice that was his only son. Abraham must have had a great struggle with this call of God. Because Abraham was human, he probably thought about packing up his bags and heading for home – *surely there was another god in the region to follow, one that didn't want him to sacrifice his only son*. Instead, Paul points out that Abraham was faithful and prepared to sacrifice Isaac until the Angel of the Lord stopped him. It was at this point that God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his offspring because in faith he did not withhold his only son from Him.

I explained all of this to the woman, and she considered my words. After a few minutes we finally agreed that if Abraham could be faithful to God when he was called to sacrifice his only son then maybe we could both be faithful to God by praying despite our confusions and frustrations. When we were finished praying nothing had been accomplished – she was still sick, as was I.

Then again something *had* been accomplished. We considered Abraham and we too were faithful contrary to our feelings and emotions. And in this way we were siblings in the faith encouraging one another as the body of Christ.