

Gifts, Talents and Prayer

On Sunday morning when I walk into the sanctuary at about 6:30, I begin praying for the church. Naturally, I pray for everything that will take place during the day, in worship, classes and other activities. I pray and give thanks for those who will be involved in leadership, not just on Sunday morning but at other times as well. I pray for those who will soon walk through the doors that their hearts will be truly open, that the needs they bring will be ones we can best meet and that they will experience something of the presence of God.

I move from pew to pew, praying over each of them. Though they are empty at the time, I pray for the people who will sit in them. I pray that God will bring people of different races, from various places around the world. I pray for those who are young and old, single and married, for families with children and those that are childless. I pray for those who are struggling financially and for those who are affluent, for those who are ill and those who are healthy. I pray that God will bring the diversity we find in the world into our congregation.

But I also pray that God send gifted people, people with abilities that serve divine ends. Without gifted people the church can't serve the God-given purpose for which it exists. "The gifts God gave were ... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13). Some gifts are obvious and public. Others are less conspicuous but no less important. And everyone is gifted in some way.

When I pray, I name specific gifts and talents. I pray that God send to Royal Palm Christian Church people with the gift of hospitality, the gift of encouragement, the gift of evangelism, the gift of extraordinary compassion for the least advantaged. I pray that God will send people who can teach and who have a passion to learn. I pray that God send people gifted with generosity and I pray that God send people with musical abilities that can help lift the hearts of others as they worship.

Please pray with me and as you pray, place the gifts God has given you in the hands of God to be used so that the church will always be "building itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:16).