



## GROW AT HOME

## DAILY DEVOTION

## DAY 44

## READ

ACTS 6

## FOCUS

<sup>1</sup>IN THOSE DAYS WHEN THE NUMBER OF DISCIPLES WAS INCREASING, THE HELLENISTIC JEWS AMONG THEM COMPLAINED AGAINST THE HEBRAIC JEWS BECAUSE THEIR WIDOWS WERE BEING OVERLOOKED IN THE DAILY DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD. <sup>2</sup>SO THE TWELVE GATHERED ALL THE DISCIPLES TOGETHER AND SAID, "IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT FOR US TO NEGLECT THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD IN ORDER TO WAIT ON TABLES. <sup>3</sup>BROTHERS AND SISTERS, CHOOSE SEVEN MEN FROM AMONG YOU WHO ARE KNOWN TO BE FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND WISDOM. WE WILL TURN THIS RESPONSIBILITY OVER TO THEM <sup>4</sup>AND WILL GIVE OUR ATTENTION TO PRAYER AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD."

## REFLECTION from PASTOR CONNIE SURRATT

In this passage we see the Hellenistic Jews (a group of Christians in the Church who embraced Greek culture and were from all over the Roman empire) complaining against the Hebraic Jews (other Christians in the Church who embraced Jewish culture and were from Judea). Both groups were followers of Christ but the Hellenistic Jews felt the Hebraic Jews were receiving better care. The Early Church took the responsibility to support widows seriously; this was part of Jewish culture because the widows often had no other means of support. This oversight was not deliberate; it was caused by poor administration or supervision. In response, the Apostles gathered the disciples together and came up with a plan to organize the Church according to peoples gifts and callings. You will notice that once the Church was organized, the people all agreed, supported that organization, and continued to grow quickly.

I love this often overlooked passage. You know why? Because I'm married to a pastor and guess what? They are usually horrible at administration. The best thing they can do for their church is to realize that they aren't "all things to all people." God created us each with very special gifts--the Church works only when we each use them.

You may be like me. It has taken a long time for me not only to discover how God "gifted me," but to be willing to acknowledge and use those gifts. I grew up in a very traditional church environment. Doyle and I worked in a very similar church when we were first married. The traditional view on what my gifts should/did look like shaped how I worked in the church for much of my life. I had a music background and thought that was the one place God had allotted for me in ministry. This was affirmed throughout my early years and I worked hard to nurture that part of myself--including getting my bachelor's degree in music. It wasn't wasted time, but buried deep inside of me were gifts that I wasn't using to the fullest because I didn't think it was acceptable in the context of ministry.

You see, when I was in high school, my dream was someday to be the CEO of a company. I worked for an oil company while I was in school (I was living in Oklahoma at the time). I loved being in a business environment and seeing how everything worked. I was set to go to Oklahoma University, get my bachelors, then my MBA, and make my mark on the world. But, God had another plan. Instead I ended up at a small Christian university--where I felt God led me--and where met and married Doyle. After graduating college we went on staff at a large church in the Chicago suburbs and accepted a job in the music department. I loved what I was doing, but I kept taking every opportunity that came my way to involve myself in the "business side" of the church.

It took a lot of years, experiences, and encouragement from my husband to realize that maybe I was ignoring some other gifts that God intended for me to use--gifts that make me want to get up in the morning and go to work with a spring in my step. I finally began to see how God was bringing together all the gifts He had placed inside of me to prepare me for the task He had set in front of me. You see, now I get the best of everything. My job includes not only helping facilitate the organizational/administration side of things here at Seacoast Grace, but that extends to the Creative Department. What could be better than me being able to



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**REFLECTION from PASTOR CONNIE SURRATT (CONT'D)**

use my administrative gifts every weekend to help “herd my butterflies?” God had a plan. He equipped me with everything I needed, but I had to be willing to use those gifts.

I believe there are many of you reading this right now that are not fully using your gifts. The church operates at its highest capacity when everyone is using their “God given” talents and abilities to see His Church grow and move forward. When the Early Church started to do this, “the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.” We are in this mission together, what is your part?

**QUESTIONS**

- IDENTIFY TWO GIFTS THAT YOU THINK GOD HAS GIVEN YOU.
- ARE YOU ONLY USING THEM FOR YOUR CAREER?
- ARE YOUR GIFTS MISSING FROM THE CHURCH?