



Disciples Health and Social Service Ministries Gathering Indianapolis, October 2013

Description

A late-October gathering of representatives from more than 30 Disciples-related health and social service ministries made history as the first joint endeavor of its kind between The National Benevolent Association (NBA) and Disciples Home Missions (DHM). During morning worship, Rev. Elaine Sanford shared this reflection with the group.

A WORSHIP REFLECTION

**By Rev. Elaine Sanford, Executive Director
HER Faith Ministries, Memphis (TN)**

This devotion is based on a writing by Pastor Chris Roberts titled “Justice, Mercy and Humility.” From Micah 6:8, *“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”* Micah presents a “job description” for the Christian life. We are to be people who do justice, who love mercy, and who walk humbly before God. This is a message that is ever before the leaders of outreach ministries as we all seek to become “the voice for the voiceless” to whom we all minister (whether we serve children, homeless, the elderly, or serve in an outdoor church) we all reach out to those who don’t seem to “FIT” into our modern, capitalistic society. We do the work that few others find appealing—or sexy—it is the thankless work of serving those who are MOST OFTEN forgotten.

There are many churches today who think that when Christians pray, read their Bibles, go to church and avoid immoral behavior, then they have done enough. Certainly, these things are good, but we all know that there is MUCH, MUCH more that we CAN and MUST do... if we are, indeed, to call ourselves “Disciples of Christ.” God has told us what is good: to do justice. We are to be men and women who seek to treat all people according to God’s own standard of justice. We are to be people who urge others to ALSO treat ‘ALL PEOPLE’ according to God’s own standards. God expects us to fight against oppression wherever it is found. God expects us to defend the defenseless, wherever they are found.

And, God expects us all to exercise love and mercy wherever it is possible do so.

- Some of us take food to the hungry.
- Some of us provide clothing for those who are naked.
- Some of us go to the prisons to visit men and women there.
- Some provide support and aid where families struggle because of generational poverty.

- Some serve the elderly...
- Some of us serve those who are called “refugees.”

Our mission and our work may vary and, yet, we all serve the same God. We all are doing the work of the one who sent us. Because we love the Sender, we love the ones to whom we are Sent. **And so, the challenge for each of us is to “NOT grow weary in our well-doing. For in due season, we will reap if we faint not.”**

So, let us recommit ourselves to the work of the Lord...

To do justice

To love mercy

And, to walk ever so humbly with Our God.

PRAYER

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,

God who is always JUST

God who always shows mercy

God who is long suffering and patient with us all

We give you thanks for all of your tender mercies...

We thank you God for calling us all into your vineyard
to labor among the “least of these.”

We pray for every ministry that is represented here...and
we pray for each of these leaders who has said, “Yes”
to your call to do this work.

We pray that you will keep our eyes, our ears, and our hearts FIXED on you
as we minister with and serve your people

Keep us humble Lord and mindful
that “without you” we can do nothing. No THING.

We pray that you will continue to strengthen each of us.

Give us the holy boldness and the perseverance to continue
to stand for justice for all people.

Touch every heart such that we will always exercise
love and mercy for all people.

And, help us to walk before you in humility and holiness
all of the days of our lives...

Lord, we ask a special blessing upon Disciples Home Missions,
the National Benevolence Association, the entire staff, and leadership

Continue to fill all of us with your Spirit
and to empower us with your LOVE

Finally, we pray for a fruitful and productive conference;
that relationships will be developed;

that alliances will be formed

and, that your will be done in the world

we pray this prayer in the Only Name that matters...

In the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.