

Outreach Blog February 2017

FROM Sharing to Discipleship

Being a grandparent is great, really great! I thought it was great being the dad of adult children who had left the nest and were living on their own, getting to watch how they would live out their life, the choices and decisions they would make and how their faith in Jesus would guide them. For me it was like payday when you saw all those years of parenting pay off. Being “Papa” to my 3 year old grandson is even grander and sweeter. I see another angle on life. I find great joy in seeing those first steps, first words and how he has learned to pray before meals. Yes, being a parent and a grandparent is wonderful, but it’s hard work that takes, patience, persistence and diligence. But the investment makes a huge difference.

### **Isn’t there more to being a witness than just saying the words?**

Witnessing, like parenting or grandparenting is best done in a continuing relationship. Jesus tells us to “go and make disciples.” Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 about our role as disciplers - “Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we *cared* for you...” As God’s child I am called to not only *share* my faith but to also *care* for those who have heard and believed the Word. The mother of a newborn is attentive to every detail of her child’s life, she watches, listens, even smells to see what needs to be done next. She anticipates, nurtures and gives a high level of care to her child around the clock. So should it be for those of us who have become spiritual parents to someone else.

This is how it is with Redeeming Life Ministries and Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Sanford, FL. This ministry saw an unmet need and began to fill it by providing a home, a family, and life structure to unwed expectant mothers. The impact was life changing not only for the mother but the child, the church and the ministry as well. Spiritually the congregation provides weekly worship and Bible studies that God has used to bring several Moms to faith and also gave the opportunity to baptize the children. To find out more about Redeeming Life Ministries [here is the link.](#)

Newborn children live with their parents. That seems pretty normal doesn’t it! Those of us who are in God’s delivery room and have become spiritual parents also have opportunities to connect with our spiritual children. What are we to do? How can you “share life?” Paul tells us, “we were delighted not only to share the gospel of God with you *but our lives as well.*” Being a spiritual parent, a discipler, means we will be sharing our lives with these individuals, spending time together, developing close relationships. While we may not live in the same house, as disciplers or spiritual parents we look for ways to connect with our spiritual children and nurture their faith life.

What can I do?

- Help them read and understand the Bible on a daily basis. Go over scripture and talk about what it says to them. I like to start in the Gospel of John.
- Talk with them about what it means to follow Jesus based on what they have read and understand from their Bible readings.
- Teach them how to pray. Help them see and acknowledge answered prayers.

- Teach them how to journal what they believe God is saying in His Word and how that applies to their life.
- Make a list of people in their life who they know need to hear about Jesus. Show them how to simply share their faith with them.
- Bring them and their family to church with you, introducing them to worship, fellow believers and your pastor.
- Invite them to your small group or start one with them.
- Talk with them about baptism, what it means and how God is at work. Ask if they have been baptized. (You may have to find and then dust off your catechism but it will be a blessing for you as well.)
- Suggest they go to adult instruction and promise that you will go with them if they desire.
- Show them how to live life, generously giving as God has freely given to them.