

March 2012

Linda asked me several weeks ago about a friend and why she and we were such good friends. As I contemplated the question, the answer came to me. I was serving as interim pastor of the church where she and her family attended. Conversations with her led to discussions of her past. She was involved in AA and talked about her addiction and how God had brought her to this point in her life. Over the course of a few weeks, several people began to share with me about their backgrounds and how God had delivered them from various problems. The more I thought about these circumstances, God led me to have a "Victorious Celebration" service at the church. I personally went to several of the people in the church and asked what they thought about it and asked if they would share their story. All agreed to do so.

We set a date for the celebration. Everyone attended with anticipation and I attended with a bit of skepticism not knowing how this would turn out. The entire service was given to this celebration with those involved doing the speaking. I only got it started. I had worked with the music director to coordinate the music with the different speakers. As the service began, we were all excited but unsure of where it would take us. As the service progressed, you could hear a snuffle here and there. Further along in the service, tissues were being passed around. As the service came to an end, every person in the building had been touched. It was a wonderful, spirit led, moving of God's spirit as we celebrated with those who shared about their struggles and how God had led them through it. For months after the service, people were still talking about the wonderful time we had in the Lord.

I write this here to maybe encourage some of our pastors or other pastors to try a day of celebrating what God has been doing in the lives of the people of the congregation. Many will come to the pastor's mind as this is being read. If planning is done ahead of time, great experiences can come from it. The service may touch many others in the congregation that are struggling as well. After all, who says the preacher has to preach all the time? Hearing about the victories from those who have gone through a difficult time may help someone else. After all, they can say it better than we.

Just a thought.