

Pastor's Perspective: Simple acts of kindness



Special to
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January was a special month for me for a couple of reasons. In January, Kathy and I celebrated our wedding anniversary. We got married on January 19, 1974, so this year marked 49 years of married life! The Lord has certainly been good to us. We have tried to faithfully follow and serve

Him together for all these years as faithful members in a local church, on the mission field and as a pastoral family. We pray that He will grant us the privilege of serving Him many more years together.

The other special occasion for me in January was my 70th birthday. It doesn't seem that I have been around here for seven decades, but that is what my birth certificate tells me! I am grateful to be in good health and pray for continued opportunities to serve the Lord.

On my birthday, Kathy wanted to take me out to eat lunch. I didn't realize why she chose the restaurant she did, until we got there, and she told me that I got to eat for free, because it was my birthday! Then, when we left, I actually paid for her lunch. So, she came out rather good by "taking me out" on my birthday. As we were eating, I noticed that another



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person was celebrating her birthday that day, as well. There was a table with several ladies, and one of them was wearing a birthday crown, and there were birthday balloons at the table, as well.

When we finished eating, I went to her table to wish her a happy birthday. As I approached the table, I saw that she was in a wheelchair, and she looked like she had celebrated quite a few birthdays. I said, "I just wanted to tell you 'Happy Birthday' and let you know that something really special happened on your birthday." She thanked me and asked me what special thing happened.

I told her that it was my birthday, too! She said, "Oh, goodness, well happy birthday to you! I turned seventy today." I said, "Well, you might not believe it,

but I turned seventy today, too!"

She laughed and stated, "Oh, how nice! We could have been twins!" I said, "I suppose it could be possible, but my Mama never mentioned me having a twin!"

After we both had a good laugh, she said, "My name is Mary, what's yours?" "I'm Brother John" was my reply; "I'm a pastor."

Then she said something that really touched me. She said, "Oh my goodness. I have fourteen brothers and sisters, and none of them came to have lunch with me on my birthday. But the Lord sent Bro. John to cheer me up and make my day!" I thanked her, and she allowed me to say a prayer of thanksgiving for both of our birthdays.

There is a lesson in this story. Some-

times, you can tell things about people by observing them. The balloons and crown let me know that Mary was celebrating a birthday. But there was no way for me to know the disappointment and hurt she felt by not having family members there to celebrate with her. The simple act of wishing her a "happy birthday" was enough to brighten her day and make it a little better.

We should all look for ways to encourage and help others. There are a lot of ways to do that:

- A simple smile and greeting may go a long way to lift someone up who is having a bad day.
- Holding the door open for someone.
- Offering someone behind you the shopping cart that you just pulled off the rack.
- A generous tip for good service.
- A soft word in response to a harsh one.
- A phone call, note or visit.

Just be attentive, and you'll see opportunities to encourage others. And, by doing so, you will be fulfilling what Ephesians 4:32 commands us to do, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as, in Christ, God forgave you."

As you obey the Lord and show kindness to others, you'll probably soon hear someone say, "You made my day!"

Be sure to take your family to church on Sunday.

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