

Friends and family of Perritte:

It has always been my understanding that God expects us to give him our very best in everything we do. With this in mind, it is important for us to look beneath the surface of everything that we do inside the walls of our buildings and beyond them into the surrounding neighborhoods and entire city of Nacogdoches.

This internal, introspection of Worship, Choir, Visitation, Ushering, Acolyting, and Nursing Home ministries, as well as Nursery Care, Sunday school, Wonderful Wednesday, Pie Crust ministry, Bazaar ministry, Youth and Mission ministries to mention a few, is often scary. It is easier to just leave everything alone the way it is; the way it has always been. Examining why we are doing things takes hard work through discussion, prayer and meditation in God's Word. It is against the culture and society in which we live because it is a process and not a quick answer. We are not talking about any of these ministries in terms of good, bad, or worthwhile. We are talking about the underlying motives, mission and goals for each task we do individually and as a church family. Once we know our motives, we continue to examine if we are offering our best to God as we minister to others.

Are there enough people passionate about the ministry they are offering? This is just as important as our motives for ministry. If people feel pressured into a ministry, they may go through the motions to complete tasks. On the surface, you may think this is enough. I say, no. It is not enough to do what you are supposed to do without being passionate in doing it; without praise and thanksgiving to God; without giving him the glory; to give him, and those you are serving, your very best.

What exactly do I mean by passion? What do you love to do to serve others? Does it give you great joy to cook a meal for someone? You do it because you want to share your love (passion) with someone else that has difficulty cooking or only eats frozen dinners. Are you passionate about gardening? Use that passion to minister to others. I think you understand what I am saying.

Do I think we should find ways to minister to people in nursing homes; yes. We cannot continue in this ministry unless we have people who are passionate to serve in this ministry. We reached a point where we were having difficulty finding enough people who had that passion to continue monthly worship services. We decided that we needed to step back and find people in our congregation who do have passion for this ministry **and** provide them with **guidance** and **support** to share their passion with others; giving their best to them and God. There are times when we may decide that some ministries, we may need to let go – temporarily or permanently. In our nursing home ministry, we are letting go for now, but not permanently.

For us to add ministries we must make room for them by letting go of others. We have many people in our church family who are active in two **or more** ministries. The more ministries an individual does: 1. The higher the risk of burning out and unable to do any ministries. 2. The greater the challenge for them to give their best to each one; no matter the amount of effort invested.

As we dig deeper into examining motives and passions, we hesitate to take another step; in the depths and the shadows of the deep, we fear adaptation and change. This is us – human beings feeling normal human feelings. Take a moment though, to look around you. God's creation is always changing; and we are included in this process. Jesus was all about adaptation and change. Every person he met, engaged in conversation with, healed, and taught, Jesus remained constant in the truth, but his approach differed according to each person or group in which he ministered. (This would be a whole worship series or bible study to consider for the future.)

I can tell you that I am passionate, joyful, and expectant that Perritte Memorial UMC will celebrate its centennial anniversary five years from now. But through God's Word of truth and wisdom, I know that for that to happen, Perritte must adapt and change, not in proclaiming the truth found in God's word, but in how it proclaims the truth in its ministries throughout our neighborhoods and the city of Nacogdoches.

**Be your best. Give your best. Do your best. Let God take care of the rest. Amen.**

Pastor Carol