

Barb's Close Friend Jonathan

Scripture Reading — 1 Samuel 20:16-17, 35-42

Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. — 1 Corinthians 12:22

The apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians in Greek. The Greek word translated as “indispensable” has two meanings: “necessary,” as in sorely needed; and “close,” as in close friend.

In her book *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship*, Barbara Newman describes arriving at church one Sunday morning feeling tired and care-worn with responsibilities for the worship service. But she kept a smile on her face.

No one noticed her weariness except Jonathan, who has Down syndrome. Before worship started, Jonathan sat down next to Barb and said, “Mrs. B, you look sad today. I will pray for you.”

Reflecting on what he did for her that morning, Barb wrote, “He did [pray for me]. . . . God used his words and presence in my life to heal my hectic and broken insides on that day. . . . Jonathan dug through the outer covering I had placed over myself in order to set me in front of God. He was my friend.”

Like the biblical Jonathan with David, so this Jonathan was a close friend to Barb. Sometimes people think gestures of concern like those Jonathan gave to Barb are not so important as preaching, teaching, or administration. But Jesus told us that the second greatest commandment is to love others. Nothing is more important to healthy church life than love.

Prayer

Surprising God, open my eyes to see the wonderful gifts you bring into the church through all the people involved, because I have trouble seeing them on my own. Amen.

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