

“SideLines”

Tracy L. Gorman – Southside Church of the Nazarene – May 20, 2008

My dear friends,

Happy Tuesday! I hope this edition of “SideLines” finds you well, and that you will take the time to read this whole publication this week, as I plan to write some important information in it.

First of all, I want to thank DaRhonda Brown for the great work she has done as our Office Manager / Administrative Assistant. As I write this to you, she is actually at Ball Memorial Hospital having some tests done on her heart. She was admitted last night. Keep her in your prayers. This week is her last week working in our office, and I want to say how INCREDIBLE the job has been that she’s done. Now, we wish her well, and complete healing, as she seeks to GET BETTER!!! We will miss her, and we appreciate the many hours she’s labored for the Lord in this position. Send her a note of thanks to Office@TrySouthside.com.

Tonight is the Women’s Ministries banquet. I know that Tammy and her helpers have worked hard to get things ready, and to create a very nice atmosphere. I truly hope the ladies have a TREMENDOUS time together. I’ve heard they’re eating some food from Johnny Carino’s. What a great place!!! I appreciate my wife organizing this event, and I thank all who’ve helped her put it together. HAVE A BLAST!!!

My absolute “thanks” to Barry Hickey (our Church Board Secretary) for the outstanding job he did last Sunday morning presenting the vision / mission / strategy of Southside. It was nice to hear the Board outline the overall vision of the church. He clearly outlined the direction that our Board feels that God is leading our church, and I thank him for being willing to do that. See friends, that direction is not one that is dependent on who the pastor is, what the economy is, who is elected to the Board...it is one that sets the pace and tone for the church for many, many years to come. It outlines who we are, where we’re going, and how we’re going to get there better than anything I’ve heard come out of my own mouth in a long time. Again, thanks to Barry and our Board for taking the initiative on this. Your leadership will ultimately make Southside strong and viable for many years to come.

Well, as was announced on Sunday night, we are going to temporarily suspend our Sunday evening services for a few weeks. As most of you know, during the summer months, there are several weeks when we do not have Sunday night service anyhow, but we’re adding to that a little. Beginning this Sunday evening, we will not have our regular service at 6:00. This suspension will last until the third week of August. There are a few times, however, that we will be having events / activities here at Southside on Sunday evenings. We will let you know when those opportunities exist by listing them in the Worship Folder (bulletin).

Now, some have asked what the rationale is for doing this, and I want you to know what the Board and myself are using as our reasoning behind this temporary suspension: For one thing, I truly believe that our workers need a break. Our staff works very hard, and puts in incredibly long hours. There is no way that any of us can consider the fact that Sunday is the Sabbath (a day of rest). Most of us get here at 7:00 or shortly thereafter, and are here until 12:30 or 1:00. Then, we typically return for meetings at 5:00, and are here until around 8:00. About 9:00 on Sunday evening, most of our workers fall into bed, and have not enjoyed a day of rest at all. I am hoping that this break gives them a chance for renewal and a little refreshment. Everybody needs that from time to time. If someone comes to church and simply sets and enjoys the service, they’re probably not going to be too tired. If you will come, serve, and invest your life into the ministry, you’ll be very tired, but also quite fulfilled. That’s a promise!

However, this is not the main reason that I requested this from the Church Board. The main reason is: I feel we need to determine the best usage of our schedule here at Southside. With the way we currently “do” Sunday night worship, are we reaching the most people, and therefore gaining the best results? Are we just doing what we’ve always done because we’ve always done it? If that’s the case, then we need to evaluate what the end result is. What are we accomplishing during that hour or so each week? What are we doing with what we’re learning? Sitting in one more church service is not what we need, especially if we’re not using what we’ve learned in all the other services in which we’ve sat, to pour ourselves back into the life of someone else. One more church service isn’t the issue. One more sermon is not what it’s going to take, brothers and sisters. It’s going to take every person who is a part of the Southside family stepping up and using what we’ve learned in the life of somebody else. That’s what’s going to make Southside a great church, and that’s what’s going to make you and I great followers of Jesus Christ.

So, I simply asked the Board for a time this summer (when we're already going to be not having service several times anyhow) if we can set up a commission which will look at what we're doing on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, and make a recommendation to the Board on how we can best serve the needs of the Southside family, and our community. That's exactly what we want to see happen, too. We all want to make sure that everything we do as a church is done for a purpose, which is **TO CONNECT PEOPLE TO JESUS CHRIST AND TO EACH OTHER!** We have nothing to fear with a good, fair, examination like this. In fact, we need to examine the who, what, when, where, why, and how of what we do on a regular basis. Why would we not want to do that???

Think of this time like this: What an opportunity this would be for each of us to spend time with our families! In our country, the family is under attack. There are more divorces, unwed pregnancies, and parent-child turmoil than at any other time in recorded history. One of the reasons this is happening is because families spend too little time together. I hope you'll take this opportunity on Sunday evenings to spend some additional time with your family. Bring them to church on Sunday morning, and just spend the whole day together!!! Think of how positive the outcome could be. Dream the possibilities with me for a moment!

If you do not have a family, find someone who needs you to love them, minister to them, care for them, witness to them, or just have them over for a meal on Sunday evening. Just think what a change would occur at Southside Church of the Nazarene, if each of us would spend some of the time on Sunday evenings this summer dumping some of what we've learned all those Sunday nights for years back into the life of someone else. Go to the Nursing home. Pray with a shut in. Work in the Muncie Mission and serve somebody dinner. Open your life and heart to someone else and do something for someone else. Our church, and your life, would be revolutionized if we took the time to love someone like Jesus! Dream those possibilities with me, too!

Ladies and gentlemen, our time on this planet is short. It is time for people who are serious about Jesus Christ to get serious about leading people to Him, and loving them after we win them. It is time for people to get serious about loving their families. It is time for people to invest their life into the lives of somebody else. I am all for learning, and I think we need to learn a whole lot more. At least I know I do. But, I am also for "doing!" We need to put what we've spent all these years learning into practice. What a change this would make in Southside, and in Muncie! WOW!!! I get excited thinking about it. Dream those possibilities for a second.

So, pray for the Commission as they study what we're doing, what we need to be doing, and how we can make the **BIGGEST** impact on our community for the Lord with the precious time that we've got. It's not about us. It's about God, and it's about our world. What we do for Him and them is what is going to be written about through time and eternity concerning our Spiritual lives and our walk with Christ. "Well done, good and faithful servant" are the words we will hear if we've used our life to make a difference for Christ. I want you to be successful, and I want this church to be successful. The key to success is found in the lives of those we will reach, teach, guide, and equip for our Lord.

I love you, and I thank you for praying, for being patient, and for trusting my leadership and the leadership of the Church Board. Believe me when I say that each of us wants to make Southside stronger and more effective than it's ever been. You have true leaders who take this GREAT COMMISSION seriously, and that's a fact. But, we need your prayers! We really, really do. We need you to trust us, brothers and sisters.

I hope the rest of your week is excellent. Make sure this "SideLines" gets to as many people as possible!

***With much love,
Pastor Tracy***

