

## **Serve Your Generation**

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

Acts 13:36 "...David...served his own generation..."

My father is seriously ill. As his condition slowly deteriorates, I am watching him cope and make decisions as to how he is going to handle this piece of the journey in his life. There are times when he is weepy. There are times when he laughs and teases with the nursing home staff. However, the predominant behavior is that of genuine concern for what is taking place in the lives of his caregivers. It wasn't long ago when a family member walked into his room to visit him and paused. What she saw was two Certified Nursing Assistants and my father joined with their hands, heads bowed and my father praying for them. I went to see him recently and one of the nurses came in and thanked him for his prayers. She had just received disturbing news regarding the condition of her spine and stated, "Dan is the first person I wanted to talk to."

The book of Acts tells us "David...served his own generation...". The word "served" in this passage is the same Greek word used when one talks of ministering acts of service to another. The simple meaning is to "act as a rower or to row". As you can guess, someone who rows is in the belly of the boat, side by side with the other rowers - rhythmically moving the boat forward as one great machine.

To serve, we must be willing to go to the belly of life and of the kingdom. True service comes out of being made aware that there is neither Greek nor Jew, rich or poor, white or black. Serving comes from knowing how much we are nothing, how much we are in need, and the reality that the only reason we are breathing is because of God's mercy.

To serve, whether in our families, our workplace, our churches or in any setting, we must be willing to place ourselves in a position of coming along side one another. Rowing is such that no one person becomes preeminent. There may be rowers who are physically stronger than another but all are doing the exact same motion. Every rower's experience may be different but the goal is the same....to keep that boat moving in the direction that the Captain has called for.

I am watching my father serve. He is fatigued, weak at times, and in need. The staff gives to him and he gives of himself to them. Even better, they are all coming in contact with the love of God that has made life possible. As this New Year begins, let's serve one another. May we never stop consciously placing ourselves along side others, compassionately, mercifully, and generously.

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