

Since childhood I have been a part of the community of faith we commonly call the church. I was born into a family which placed godly living at the top of its priority list. My parents were faithful in making the teachings of faith available to me. Though I grew up in the church, my parents tried to avoid drowning me in *religion*. Yet they sought to instill in me the values found in scripture.

As I matured in my own faith, I tried to find my place in the church and in life. After many attempts, I found a place in the church as a choir director and youth worker. Through my work there, and through words of encouragement and direction provided by members and the pastor of that congregation, God clearly revealed to me that he wanted me to become more involved in the ongoing ministry of the church. Following that awakening, I began the journey to the ordained ministry.

Since beginning my pastoral ministry, I have found that people are hungry to hear and to experience the love and freedom which are found in Christ. In almost every setting in which I have ministered, the good news that God loves them as they are, and that God will free them from the baggage of the past, has been received with much joy. I have been privileged to minister in many settings, and with a fairly large number of persons.

I feel more strongly than ever that God has called me to ministry. God has endowed me with gifts for music and public speaking. People tell me I have the gift of compassion. God has been gracious in permitting me to see a number of the persons I have been in ministry with come to faith, and to share in their joy.

I am always looking for opportunities to witness to God's love, and to introduce persons to the ministry of the Church. I believe the ministry to which God is calling me extends beyond the walls of the church I serve to the whole community in which I live. My ministry includes, for instance, serving as a Georgia P.O.S.T & International Conference of Police Chaplains certified Law Enforcement Chaplain. This allows me to *live* the message of unity that I preach on Sundays, among our law enforcement community as well as with the victims of crime.

My ministry causes me to be active in the local school system, as I seek to help provide a quality educational environment for the community's children. I help provide supplies for those children who cannot afford them. I also provide a role model for the children as I accompany them on field trips, and encounter them in the halls and class rooms. During these times, I try to help relieve social tensions, by relating to children without regard to their ethnic or economic background. In so doing, I seek to witness to the gospel of unity, not only for the children, but for the faculty as well.

I see ministry as more than preaching, though preaching is a very important component. I see ministry being as much about presence -- both God's presence and my presence as a representative of God and of the community of faith -- as it is about the sharing of information. I have come to understand that, for a person or family

in a time of crisis, the physical presence of the minister is itself a form of ministry. I still feel the need to have the right thing to say, the right word, the right action, the magic *thing* that will make this situation better. But I am still learning that sometimes it is often enough to *simply be there*, and that *silence* is not a bad thing.

God has blessed my family and allowed us to be a blessing in so many ways. I welcome the opportunity to share with you at any time. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to you or your family in any way.

In the service of Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nathaniel".

Nathaniel