

From Suzie Wright, Dubuque, IA  
Volunteer to Nightlight, Bangkok, Thailand  
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II Corinthians 8:3-5

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,  
4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.  
5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

This passage of scripture is talking about the Macedonian church but it describes the way the Holy Spirit has taken hold of my upcoming trip to the Night Light Bangkok Mission Center.

I read Annie Dieselberg's prayer request last summer concerning the two English language volunteers who were leaving. I took the time to pray for the requests that Annie had sent that month, like I normally do but, this time I was moved to do more. I wrote her back and asked how much it would take to come. As a single mom of two college-aged children, I didn't have buckets of money just waiting for a purpose but I could not go back to work until I asked the question.

When Annie wrote back and told me what an average price was for a plane ticket and monthly expenses would be, I realized it was possible for me to go if I was debt-free and was willing to give-up my apartment and put my things into storage. I thought my kids would be in dorms and my return would advent my finally living in an apartment with a real-size kitchen. I thought this was about how I was empowered to go and using my resources, make disciples. How wrong I was.

This was about the Holy Spirit bursting at the heart seams of those around me.

When I told Pastor Tim Bees about wanting to go he was surprised that I had made the decision to not ask for assistance. Pastor Tim and others in the church have been in prayer for a long time about the congregation and have felt that God was getting us ready to move in amazing ways. I didn't realize God would use this preparation time in so many awesome ways and for so many people.

An hour after asking my boss for a leave of absence, he called me back into his office and offered me a promotion, a raise and would still allow me the leave of absence.

After prayer and preparation, Pastor Tim told the congregation I felt called to go. After more time, Pastor Tim challenged me to accept that the church had a sponsorship role in my going and that I needed to humble myself enough to accept it. He then challenged the congregation of First Baptist Dubuque, IA to sponsor my trip. We budgeted \$4,000 for my 77 day trip. And resumed praying.

My co-workers choose to give-up their normal door prizes for the company Christmas party and gave those funds to the trip.

I am a member of a service society and was asked to share NightLight's story to the members during the chapter's November T.T.T. Society meeting. One of the women came to me with funds she wanted to have used toward my ticket and another felt compelled to donate 1/2 of the 70,000 air miles needed for my trip. My airline ticket that had been projected to cost between \$1,500-\$1,600 instead it cost less than \$1,000.

On the night we presented the vision to the congregation we collected more than \$1,000 in pledges and cash. That was the Sunday evening before Thanksgiving. Because of the reduction in ticket expense, we lowered the goal to \$3,300, but God had other plans.

Now understand, we are not a big church. There are roughly 45 members of the church and up-until this year we were averaging about 50-60 people a service. This year we've expanded and our numbers are usually closer to 85 on a Sunday morning, if you include the children and infants.

At the Sunday morning, worship service on Dec. 24, Pastor Tim announced that there were more than \$4,000 pledged and received for the trip.

Oh the joy, the humbling sense of knowing that God has made this happen and that soon it would time to go.

One of my co-workers anonymously donated 40 hours of PTO (personal time off) to make sure I would have a paycheck on my return and another donated 8 hours too.

My TTT sisters weren't done either; they held a surprise (to me) silent auction and raised more than \$500.

My co-workers have scheduled pot lucks, bake sales and have set out a collection jar. I don't know how much they will end-up with but I'm humbled to see God working through them too. I work for Shepherd Incorporated and although the company is named after its founder, these days it feels like I'm working in the Good Shepherd's company.

One month from today I'll be boarding my first international flight and although I'll physically be the only one coming from Iowa, I'll be lifted there by wings of eagles and the many prayers of those who understand that with God, all things are possible.