

WHAT IF...

Matthew 7:7-12

The Day before Lent, Tuesday February 13, 2018

What if we as United Methodists, located in every corner of West Virginia really took the time this Lent to fast, pray and listen for God's call to respond to the opioid epidemic?

Fast: What if we set aside food for a day or a meal? What if when we felt a pang of hunger we stopped what we were doing and prayed for those who hunger uncontrollably for an opioid? What if we took the time to think about how the addicted person hungers every day for this drug, to the expense of their health, their family and their future? If skipping a meal makes us miserable and irritable along with that little voice in our head that tries to get us to cheat on our fast – how does the person caught in addiction feel every day?

Pray: What if we set aside time to ask God for guidance. What if we honestly asked God our questions about addiction, shouted out our fears and frustrations about the addicted? What if we asked God to make clear what our (mine and yours) calling is to respond to this epidemic? What if we asked what our church's calling is? What if we intentionally prayed for the healing of those who suffer from substance abuse disorder, healing for their families and healing for our communities?

Listen: What if throughout this time of Lent we listened for God's call on our lives? What if we listened for a loud booming voice or a still quiet voice or God's guidance in a trusted friend or in the voice of a complete stranger? What if we listened for God's guidance in the crazy businesses of the day and in quiet of our nightly dreams?

Respond: When God calls the body of Christ – every body part must respond. Now is the time, we all have a calling we have all been blessed with specific gifts and graces that are needed to end the opioid epidemic. Is this scary? Yes indeed. Is this unfamiliar territory? Yes again. Is God with us? Absolutely!

It is not enough for us to open our church doors and wait for the epidemic to end. We must leave our sanctuaries and enter the battle. Onward Christian Soldiers!

Prayer: Lord, we pray for healing of those who suffer from substance abuse disorder, healing for their families and healing for our communities. Show us ways to respond to this epidemic. Amen.

Rev. Barry Steiner Ball
steinerball@gmail.com