

From the Pastor's Desk

Move at the Pace of Guidance

When faced with decisions to make, one of the most difficult questions to answer is “What does God want me to do?” Simply asking the question is a sign of significant faith. How many people seriously try to discern what God wants in their daily lives? Sometimes we go through life on automatic pilot and the questions: “What does God want?” or “What Would Jesus Do?” become an unwelcome intrusion. This is especially true the busier we get. Even as a pastor, I can find myself on automatic pilot and presume I am operating under the influence of God’s guidance. Then I read scriptures such as: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Psalm 55:8-9

Author Christina Baldwin puts it this way: *In a world of speed and distraction, pace of guidance invites us to combine the practices of measured movement and listening. Speed is some guy running through the airport shouting into a cell phone. Pace is going around the block with a three-year-old and noticing everything the child is noticing. When we move at pace, we have time to question and time to listen for answers before moving on. When we move at the pace of guidance, it occurs to us to wonder what plans the Divine might have for us, in the midst of the plans we have for ourselves.*

Speed tends to cancel out guidance. When we move in speed, we are out of touch with spirit, and when we are out of touch with spirit, the ego steps into control. "After all," I hear that old familiar voice say in my mind, "Somebody has to be driving!" And drive it does. Personal will runs rampant, like a headstrong horse.

The pace of guidance, like peace of mind, begins internally – in me. Even though all my conditioning teaches me to accommodate speed, I am responsible for the pace I bring to the moment, just as I am responsible for the peace I bring to the moment.

She goes on to discuss “rehumanizing” our speed of life and to remember to take a slower pace and listen for spiritual guidance. When we slow down and become receptive, we are able to hear the quiet voice of the Lord within us. Baldwin goes on to state:

Of course silence on the outside and silence on the inside are two different things. My mind is often screaming with instructions, directions, and anxieties. So, I decided to pose two questions to my soul: “What do you want me to do?” and “What do I need to change in order to do it?”

These are two very important questions for all of us to ask. They are also important questions for our congregation to ask when looking at ministerial priorities. So, please join me in this prayer:

“Lord, what do you want us to do? What do we need to change in order to do it?”

Let us listen for the response and then move at the pace of guidance both in our personal lives and in the life of our congregation.

~ Pastor Bob