

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update february 2012

I often wondered what makes the work of Portland Fellowship so successful. By being a part of this amazing community, I have experienced one of the majestic ways God brings about His restoration in the lives of His children. The “ministry of empathy” is a vital element that God uses to usher us into healing. Romans 12:5 says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” I had never seen the power of this truth until I came here.

Last night, as I sat in small group surrounded with some of the women of Taking Back Ground, I recognized a common response. As each of them shared, it was inevitable that they would be met with words of compassion, sighs of understanding, and nods of agreement and empathy. I looked around the room to see similar expressions acknowledging each other’s pain and grief. It was seriously a beautiful thing. These women do a great job of “rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn.” I can’t imagine someone in my small group sharing, in their vulnerability, about how much their heart hurt and being met with a “you deserved it” or “you’re really unhealthy” or “you’re not praying hard enough.” I myself can’t imagine being in a pit and having someone standing at the edge looking down on me and just spouting off Scripture. I know I wouldn’t find it helpful, no matter how benevolent their intentions. Neither can I imagine being in that pit and having someone throw tools down to me so that I can, in my weakness and frailty, climb my way out on my own. It would be impossible and... even annoying. Now don’t get me wrong, I love the good intentions that many of us have, and I do believe in the supernatural power and authority of the scriptures. Yet, how many of us have prayed the Scriptures in order to have something change in our lives (something for good) and never have an ounce of healing/change come from it? When Lazarus died, Jesus joined with his family and wept. No other response was appropriate.

I believe that the ministry of empathy at Portland Fellowship is vital for several reasons. It creates the safety that people need to be vulnerable. Empathy doesn’t shut people down- it enables them to feel understood and allows them to be real. It communicates worth and value to a person. Sy Rogers says, “Let what happens to other people matter to you.” That way, they can fully know that *they* matter to you. Right now, I have close friends that are going through a very trying time in their lives. Their newborn baby faces the possibility of death unless either a heart surgery or transplant comes through. When they share their pain with me, the only appropriate response is to cry /grieve alongside them. I wrestle with the fact that others minimize their pain. Trying to “cheer them up” invalidates very real feelings in a very intense season of life. In fact, their feelings of pain and sadness are completely warranted and justified.

Empathy also allows people the opportunity to authentically seek Jesus. At the moment, the women’s ministry of Portland Fellowship is thriving. We have two small groups for women and each of them in their own ways are living as Isaiah 50:7 says, “*Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will. And I know that I will not be put to shame.*” Coming along side each of the participants and communicating worth to their lives through empathy gives them the strength to make good decisions and work through their struggles. It allows them to look at the painful areas of their lives that Jesus is directing them to address because they finally know



Cynthia (here with her husband Brian) has been on staff since 2009, serving as Ministry Assistant providing administration and support for women in TBG..

“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners.”

ISAIAH 61 : 1

that they are not alone in the process. This is absolutely essential for those who are addressing relational and sexual issues. Knowing that we are not alone and that we are understood (through community and relationships, with others and God), we can allow God to begin to repair the damage in our hearts.

I haven't always had a heart cultivated with compassion and empathy. In fact, I have been emotionally immature and insensitive in the past. The Biblical account of Job showed how he encountered callousness and insensitivity. It's an account, as my husband Brian says, of how NOT to do it. Sadly, though, in the past I have been Eliphaz or Bildad. I love Job's response to his "encouragers":

"I have heard all this before. What miserable comforters you are! Won't you ever stop blowing hot air? What makes you keep on talking? I could say the same things if you were in my place. I could spout off criticism and shake my head at you. But if it were me, I would encourage you. I would try to take away your grief." (Job 16: 2-5)

It was at Portland Fellowship where I myself found worth communicated to me by the staff and workers who truly walked in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. People took the time to not only listen to me, but to validate my pain and sufferings, and then give me the strength that I needed to walk out of it. My love cup finally began to get filled up, and I began to look to the Lord to meet my needs and not to those around me. I didn't have to be Eliphaz in my immaturity and brokenness, but learned to love like Jesus did because I experienced it myself. We don't fix people here at Portland. We empathize with them. May God continue to use Portland Fellowship to communicate value to the lives of so many.

In Christ,



Cynthia Beaudry
Ministry Assistant

creative ways to give..

We are often asked if there are specific needs that PF has that are not ordinarily covered in the newsletter. We often highlight financial needs, or prayer needs, but there are other ways that you can help the ministry of PF.

As most of you may know, PF is based in a century old house in the Hawthorne District of SE Portland. A house this old occasionally needs some TLC and maintenance. However, we really don't have any tools around to get the job done. If you have extra tools around the garage, or feel compelled to pick up something new for us, this would be greatly appreciated!

Another need around the house is carpeting. The current carpet is almost a decade old, and is showing a great deal of wear and traffic. We would love for anyone with skills or resources in this area to contact us if you are interested in helping.

prayer requests

We are already beginning to prepare for our retreat! Please pray that we would implement God's vision to our best ability.

Sharon, our resident counselor, would like prayer covering as she counsels people of various seasons and walks of life. She desires to be guided by His Holy Spirit in her counseling.

Please pray for Jason, our director, to have renewed strength and godly wisdom as he directs the ministry of Portland Fellowship.

Pray for God's continued favor over our work, our finances, and our lives.

Please pray for our Upper Room Interns, as they continue to allow the Lord to reshape their hearts and minds.

Pray that the ministries of Taking Back Ground and The Hope Group are made known to all who are in need, and that they will find the courage to contact the ministry.

portland fellowship is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 nondenominational organization. We are exclusively supported through private donations, support services, and offerings. Thank you for your gifts.

events calendar

feb 17 & mar 16

the hope group

Join us for our family and friends program for a time of prayer, encouragement, support and a great meal. 6:30 pm.

feb 18

missions fair

Calvary Chapel SE

Jason will be representing PF at this missions fair.

mar 9-11

tbg retreat

Annual retreat at the Oregon coast. Open to current participants and alumni. Contact the office for more details.

mar 29

drew speaking

Drew will be speaking at a youth retreat in Olympia, WA.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com