



Servant's Corner

November 2013



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How Do You Measure Success?

By Rich Henderson, Love INC Director

Often the two questions churches ask to determine the success of their efforts to help the less fortunate are: 1) *Did our church members feel good about it?* 2) *Were our numbers impressive?* “Numbers” could be the number of cans of food collected, volunteer hours put in on a home makeover, or the percentage of the congregation that participated in a particular event.

From a Biblical perspective, those aren't the best metrics. What if the numbers were impressive and church members felt really good, but the dignity of the poor was diminished. What if the event caused those that were helped to think, “See, we can't provide for ourselves. We are dependent on these church people to provide for us.” What if church members felt good about a service project because their attitude was, “We are such good people. We should get our picture in the paper for this.”

Try these questions instead: 1) *Were church members and those they helped moved toward maturity in Christ?* That was Paul's measuring stick from Colossians 1:28, “And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.” 2) *Did this event spur the members of the congregation to develop a lifestyle of humble, Christ-like service?* I believe the goal of church service events should be to provide people with an on-ramp which will lead to a lifestyle of serving others. 3) *Did this event facilitate the formation of relationships between the members of our congregation and people in need?* My conviction is that the best thing that could happen to a person in need is for them to be befriended by YOU. As a Christian, you could not only meet their tangible need but also share the gospel. You could also invite them to church where they could find support and encouragement. *Does your church need to reconsider how to measure success in your ministry to people in need?*

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